

GURU NANAK

The Divine Master Of Universe



European Panjabi Sath, Walsall (U.K.)



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**European Panjabi Sath
Walsall (U.K.)**



GURU NANAK (The Divine Master Of Universe)

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*Dedicated to the loving
presence of the Divine
Guiding Light,
Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, on
his 550th Birth Anniversary.*

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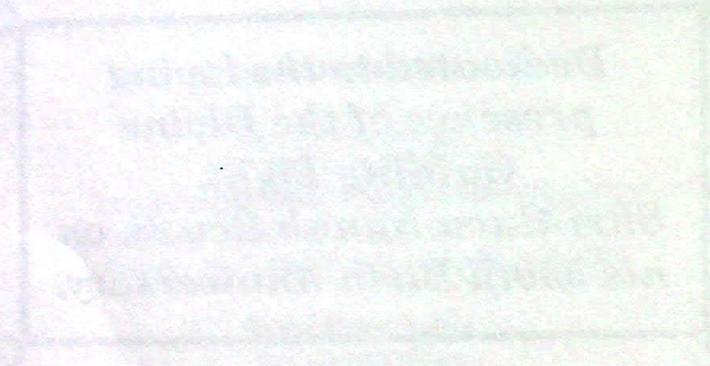
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PREFACE

Over thousands of years, the sages, seers and prophets have been remembered in the history of man with great reverence. In the domain of spirituality Hinduism, Buddha, Mahavir Jain, Lao Tzu and Shinto have dominated the scene in the East while Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam have ruled the roost in the West. Further ahead the worship of numerous deities, ghosts, chimeras, genius etc. has been in vogue in the aboriginal tribes of Africa, Australia, North and South America in one form or the other even today. The tug of war between theists and atheists, the superstitious and the rationalists anchoring on science only has been going on since times immemorial. This strife has played a big role in creating a divide in the mankind. Outwardly, the religions have been harping on peace, fraternity and equality but as a matter of fact, the magnitude of bloodbath in the name of religion and God is second to none in the world.

The followers of every religious faith have been propagating their religion as the greatest of all and the one and only way to lead to the communion with God. They take it as a great spiritual obligation to allure maximum people towards their faith. So they start taking even unfair means like oppression and coercion for fulfilling their ambitions. The rulers have been employing all kinds of machinations for the justification of their own interests. Even today the same methods are being used to win over or simply win the people by word or sword. Without understanding this entire background we cannot understand the ideology of Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak has touched the pinnacle of joining rather than creating fissures. He took the entire creation including the animate fauna and flora as also inanimate beings as one single whole. His path of marking unity among our earth, Sun and planets revolving around it was quite unthought of five hundred years ago. Treating whole creation as one he gave its credit to Nature- the supreme Creator. Guru Nanak's greatest philosophy is his concept of *Ek Onkar*. Whosoever gets to grasp its essence is freed of not only feelings of enmity towards

anybody but even the sense of estrangement also. He transcends the biological relations and becomes one with the Existence. When we imbibe the guru's message of *Sarbat da Bhala* (well-being of all), then we feel to have become one with the entire Universe with its constituents like vegetation, mountains, deserts, oceans etc. The man-made barriers stand dissolved on their own. The egocentric people abandon their greed, arrogance, lust, hubris, craze for name and fame and come on the track of *gurmat*. The panacea of Guru Nanak's ideology salvages us from inertia and leads us on the path of true bliss. Since times immemorial spiritual masters, scientists, geographers, environmentalists, philosophers and litterateurs have been trying to demystify the mystery of existence but nobody could match Guru Nanak who came out with very brief, lucid and comprehensive concept of the origin of existence. The way he explained the whole thing with a combo of vocal and instrumental music is unprecedented so far.

We have wrought on ourselves a good deal of devastation in the name of development by disregarding the role of Nature in our life. But Guru Nanak tried to make us realize in his *bani* the Nature is the only sustainer of life on earth saying:

Pavan guru pani pita, mata dhart mahat
Divas raat dui daayi daya khele sagal jagat

To be a traveler on the path shown by Guru Nanak, we must understand his ideology both in theory and practice. Each religious philosophy has shown the path to the mankind in its own way. There is no need to be judgmental on any other faith but Guru Nanak's ideology is common and meant of all.

Guru Nanak knew well that a good combination of theory and practice is necessary to make a philosophy mankind-friendly. So first he himself tried to understand the contemporary and ancient ideologies of life. He traveled long distances and had a dialogue with a number of people governed by a good variety of beliefs and convictions. He learnt a lot from them and endeavored to bring home his own viewpoint to them in a very humble and rational manner. How did he succeed in this Herculean exercise at a time when the means of transport were not as developed as they are today? And, those he spoke to were

men of different languages. This is something which calls for research.

According to *gurmat* man attains to salvation in this very life if he earns his livelihood by the sweat of his brow, shares his earning with the needy and always remembers the name of God. One who bows before His will transcends the mundane and reaches the higher realms to become one with God in the end. The malaises like profiteering, consumerism, hedonism, wars etc. can be surmounted by feeling the presence of all-pervasive God in His creation.

We, the members of Panjabi Sath have been trying for the last three decades to understand Nature and harmonize with it at lower level. We live a life of equipoise with no enmity or grudge against anybody. During all this while we have never come in confrontation with anybody.

Panjabi Sath came into existence with a view to understanding the language, heritage and culture of Punjab. This is what helped us in understanding the ideology of gurus, **bhagats** and Sufi saints. We learnt a lot during these thirty years and this in led us to the publication of this book. We believe that synchronization of diversity is what makes the society move ahead. That is why this book is in a way, a bouquet of about fifty articles written by the scholars who have carved a niche for themselves through their talent. We hope that you will definitely read this book with great deference for the shabd and make us familiar with your valuable suggestions.

We are highly grateful to the friends who extended us help in any form whatsoever in getting this book published.

***Nanak naam charhdi kala
Tere bhaane sarbat da bhala***

*Wednesday, 18 Assu
Samat 550 Nanaksahi
(02 October, 2019)*

**Mota Singh Sarai
Convener
Panjabi Sath
WalSall (U.K.)**

**Dr. Nirmal Singh
Humble Servant:
Panjabi Sath
Lambra (Jalandhar)**

GURU NANAK - THE VOICE OF PEACE, UNITY AND TRUTH

Suvaran Singh Virk
Kariwala, Sirsa (Haryana)

With the only a few exceptions in the human history there has always been a conflict of views in every age because of the existence of different social classes. This division of classes starts with the age of civilized mankind when man became able to produce more than he needed. Due to the control of a particular segment on the produce, there came into being the concept of private property. In the ancient past, the forces of production were not very much developed. So, there was little chance of any surplus storage. As the implements of production grew, the production increased. As the fights to grab pastures and forest ensued between the rival groups, the people of the defeated side were enslaved. Since the slaves were flogged to get more and more work from them, it led to the generation of the force of labor. Thus two social groups- the ruler and the ruled- came into existence. The owner of property was the ruling class which further invented state for the protection of its wealth. In our country, the signs of state are not older than about five thousand years. Those engaged in production and the forces of production together make the production structure. Since, the society as a whole participates in the process of production, it is social in nature. But the nature of grabbing its fruit is personal in character. The share of produce determines the class identity. The first class division showed up in the form of master and slave while the second one was between the feudal lords and vassals. After industrial revolution the new edition of this division was again between the capitalist class and the proletariat class. This very class conflict regulates the social dynamics. Therefore, the ideas, institutes etc. are never impartial. They tend to jump into the favor of one or the other side. These rules are applicable also in the interpretation of religion or religious faith. Only those having the potential to identify and lead the motor energies of their age turn out to be the epoch makers. From this perspective,

Guru Nanak too was the epoch maker who had stood tooth and nail in favor of the underprivileged, the deprived, oppressed, suppressed peasantry and emancipation of women.

The era of Guru Nanak (1469-1539) was that new inventions and industrial revolution in the Europe. It led to the possibility of giving way to the emergence of the capitalist class. On the other hand, the contemporary India was ruled by the Muslim rulers who ruled over our country with the support of the feudal lords and their militia. The working class including peasants, artisans and laborers was subjected to loot at the hands of the state. The centers of handicrafts cropping up in the cities were also reeling under the taxes imposed by the ruthless rulers. Half or sometimes three fourth part of the farmers' produce was taken away by way of land revenue. With great difficulty, the oppressed farmer would fend for his family with the remaining half or one fourth of his produce. Guru Nanak became the voice of these voiceless people. That is why Sikhism founded by him is treated as a faith of rebellion of the suppressed underprivileged class against feudalism. That is why Guru Nanak's successors i.e. the fifth, sixth, ninth and tenth Guru (s) arose up in arms against the Mughals. The climax of Guru Nanak's Sikh revolution was seen with the appearance of Banda Bahadur on the scene. Banda is known to have exterminated feudalism from Punjab and distributing land to the tillers including those from the lower castes and backward classes.

Along with farmers, urban traders and artisans including the downtrodden labor class started coming under the banner of Guru Nanak against the feudal oppression. That is how the Guru's teachings became a ray of hope for these classes. The most important contribution of Guru Nanak was to convey his message in his own language. Till then the language of the ruling or elite class was different from that of the masses. Sheikh Farid who preceded Guru Nanak three centuries back had penned down very sweet poetry in chaste Punjabi imbued with the dialect of Multan. It had reached him through Sheikh Braham, one of Farid's descendents. Similarly, journeying to several places during his odysseys Guru Nanak had become familiar with the humanistic writings of the Bhagat composers viz. Kabir, Ravi

Das, Namdev, Dhanna, Sain, Sadhna. These *bhagats* had written their poetry in the *Saadh Bhakhya*- the then popular dialect. Like these Bhagat poets, the Guru also denounced the evils like casteism, rites and rituals. Also, he propagated the message of peace and love among different religious faiths and sects.

According to Toynbee, the eminent historian the history of India is that of clash between Hindus and Muslims. The first historian of Guru Nanak, Bhai Gurdas writes about Hindu-Sikh antagonism as under:

Chaar varan chaar majhban jag vich Hindu muslmaane.

Khudi bakheel takabbari khichotaan Karen dhingaane.

Gang Banaras Hinduan Makka Kaaba musalmaane.

Sunnat mussalmaan di tilak janju Hindu lobhaane.

Ram Raheem kahaide ik naam dui raah bhulaane.

Bed kateb bhulai ke mohe lalach duni saitaane.

Sach kinaare reh gaya kheh marde bahman maulaane.

Siro na mito aavan jaane. (21) (1)

The teachings of Guru Nanak constructed a bridge between Hindus and Muslims so as not only to initiate but also perpetuate a dialogue between the two communities. He stressed upon picking whatever is good in each faith and discarding all that is not worth adoption. While living in Sultanpur the first revelation he made public after coming out of the Vein River was:

Na ko Hindu na Mussalmaan.

Through this message he tried to deliver the truth that everybody takes birth as human being but his religious faith depends on his parentage. So there is no point in squabbling in the name of different religions. The commonest religion of man should be to feel concerned about every fellow being. When asked in Mecca which from the two faiths- Hinduism and Islam- he thought better he said in the words of Bhai Gurdas:

Puchhan gall imaan di kaji mullan ikatthe hoi.

Vadda saang vartaya lakh na sakei kudrat koi.

Puchhan fail kitab no hindu vadda ki musalmaanoi.

Baba aakhe haajia subh amlan baajhahu dono roi.

**Hindu musalmaan dui dargah andar lahan na dhoi.
Kacha rang kusambh da pani dhote thir na rahoi.
Karn bakheeli aap vich Raam Raheem kuthai khaloi.
Raahi saitani dunia soi. (33) (1)**

He patronized the marginalized people reeling under the millstones of exploitation in dehumanized conditions and said that man's distance from or closeness to God also depends on his deeds. It is meaningless to feel proud of belonging to a high caste:

**Fakarh jaatee fakarh naa-o.
sabhnaa jee-aa ikaa chhaa-o.
aaphu jay ko bhalaa kahaa-ay.
naanak taa par jaapai jaa pat laykhai paa-ay ||1||
(Salok Mehlaa 1, page 83)**

According to the Master nobody will be condoned in the Divine court simply because he belongs to a higher caste. There one has to come across new beings who have nothing to do with caste:

**agai jaat na jor hai agai jee-o navay.
(Mehlaa 1, page 469)**

The followers of Guru Nanak's path had to favor the unfavored and become shelter of the shelterless, honor of the unhonored and strength of the weak. A strong public awareness can do wonders and this is what Guru Nanak was doing by shaking the oppressed lesser mortals out of slumber. He announced on behalf of his God that only those who cared for the so-called lower castes or working class like farmers, artisans etc. would deserve his grace:

**neechaa andar neech jaat neechee hoo at neech.
naanak tin kai sang saath vadi-aa si-o ki-aa rees.
jithai neech samaalee-an tithai nadar tayree bakhsees. ||4||3||
(Sireeraag mehlaa 1, page 15)**

All disputes in the world arise out of inequitable distribution. The Guru describes the Hindu who usurps what claims to the other as a cow-eater. And, if a musalmaan is guilty of

the same he is as much a sinner as a pig-eater. The other's claim has been equated with eating carcass. No spiritual Master blesses the one who deprives someone of his legitimate right:

**hak paraa-i-aa naankaa us soo-ar us gaa-ay.
gur peer haamaa taa bharay jaa murdaar na khaa-ay.
galee bhisat na jaa-ee-ai chhutai sach kamaa-ay.
maaran paahi haraam meh ho-ay halaal na jaa-ay.
naanak galee koorhee-ee koorho palai paa-ay. ||2||**
(Mehlaa 1, page 141)

According to a Soviet-Hind scientist K.Z. Ashrifian, "With the socio-economic development of India in the 15th. century through the strengthening of feudal production relations which stands manifested in the mushrooming of medieval cities as handicraft hubs, pertains to the escalation of feudal exploitation. The anti-feudalist trends gained momentum in the country."

"From 13th century to the first half of the 16th. century a manifestation of the intensified social contradictions of feudal society becomes visible in the rise of Bhagti movement's anti feudal ideology. There being mainly an ideological basis of anti-feudal drive by the urban elements like traders and craftsmen, the Bhagti movement reflected also the aspirations of farmers who were as much the victims of feudal exploitation and social inequality."

"The biggest elemental and democratic branch of Bhagti movement was Sikhism."

"The teaching of Guru Nanak is religio-mystical in form but in essence it was anti feudal. Its public acceptance vouches for the intensification of social resentment in India. His poetry not only mirrors common Hindu-Muslim culture but it also became a part of the ongoing anti-feudal culture as well. It was raising itself in confrontation with class group despite the fact that Guru Nanak's message did not go beyond the limits of the domain of religion."

"Sikhism was far closer to the masses as compared to the viewpoint of several leaders of European renaissance." (Guru Nanak - A collection of essays, Punjab Book Center, Chandigarh.

The said scholar also writes that the leaders of European

renaissance had made Latin, a language far estranged from people. But the target recipients of Guru Nanak's message were not familiar with the classic languages like Arabic, Persian or Sanskrit. Therefore, Guru Nanak enabled Punjabi to reach his people. He treated ignoring his language as deserting his religion. When the aspirants of governmental positions having gained the knowledge of these languages spoke them in their homes the way our people do it today, the Guru said:

khataree-aa ta Dharam chhodi-aa malaychh bhaakhi-aa gahee.
sarisat sabh ik varan ho-ee Dharam kee gat rahee. ||3||
 (Dhanaasree mehlaa 1, Ghar 3, page 663)

The Master says that under the pressure of Islamist rulers or just to be in their good books, oblivious of their language and culture our people were imbued in the same color. His words are very much applicable on the prevalent situation today when the worshipers of Mammon are out to efface our regional identities and the rulers of the country tend to Indianise all forcibly. In Guru Nanak's times also the enforced uniformity of communal forces had ridiculed the Guru. The religious precincts were being taxed, the Guru was forced to wear blue attire symbolic of the Mughal empire.

aad purakh ka-o alhu kahee-ai saykhaa^N aa-ee vaaree.
dayval dayviti-aa kar laagaa aisee keerat chaalee. ||5||
koojaa baa^Ng nivaaj muslaa neel roop banvaaree.
ghar ghar mee-aa sabhnaa^N jee-aa^N bolee avar tumaaree. ||6||
 (Basant hindol ghar 2 mehlaa 2, page 1191)

For disseminating his message, the guru took along Bala, a Hindu farmer of Rai Bhoi (where he had a well in his name) and Mardana- a Muslim *miraasi* who turned out to be a good *keertanist* and Rebeck player. When Mardana played on this stringed instrument the Master would sing the bani i.e. the divine poetry according to the occasion. The major part of his poetry has the folk idiom built on the metaphor and images chosen from the folk life of Punjab. He was a lover of nature with the result that his poetry has the images of the rivers, brooks, sea, flora, forest, a good variety of weathers, various sects and living style of

different people.

In his "History of the Sikhs, J. D. Cunningham writes about Guru Nanak and other *bhagat* poets in a comparative study that the other reformers only supplemented the forms of opposition but Guru Nanak sowed the seeds of an integrated nation. Undoubtedly, Guru Nanak was the proponent of the modern concept of Punjab, Punjabi and Punjabi ethos. He marked the beginning of integrating this region as a political unit. Making Punjabi language the diction of *Adi Granth* he glorified it as a literary language and in the second half of eighteenth century the Punjabis as a nation became independent rulers as well.

It was only as a result of Nanak's ideology that the English colonialists thought of grabbing Punjab about a full century after the Plassey war implying the conquest of India over Punjab. Under the influence of Guru Nanak's ideology the proud free man continued his fight through various movements against the British Empire till they rolled their luggage to leave India.

Guru Nanak's religion suggests the deliverance of the working class including the farmers and artisans by holding them in high esteem. We emphasize this point with reference to Prof. Puran Singh's statement, ***"The guru used to praise the labor of all kinds. He condemns indolence and laxity both at physical and mental level. Both kinds of laziness is anti-spiritual. Service through hard work is the only golden idea. Only hard work is the service to man and God. The enjoyment that does not come from labor is just an illusion. Lavishing perspiration while toiling hard is the true prayer. Ringing bells or telling the rosary is ridiculing the inner truth."***

(Prof. Puran Singh, *The Music of Soul*, Vol. 2, Translated by Kirpal Singh Kasel, P.77)

Guru Nanak gave a clarion call of truth at the famous religious centers of both Hindus and Muslims. He made three odysseys in the East, South, West and North over a period of more than two decades. Everywhere he preached working hard, partake the fruit of labor with others and remember the name of God. He liberated the people enmeshed in superstitions. He said that to attain God one need not renounce home and hearth. He can be attained only through the sweat of your toil. Numerous

traits of the personality of a gursikh have been given in Guru Nanak's *bani*:

jī boli-ai pat paa-ee-ai so boli-aa parvaan.
fikaa bol viguchnaa sun moorakh man ajaan.

(Sireeraag Mehlaa 1, page 15)

naanak vaday say vadbhaagee jinee sach rakhi-aa ur Dhaar. ||34||
(Raamkali Mehlaa 1, Sidh Ghost, page 942)

Nanak lekhei ikk gall hor haumei jhakhna jhaakh. ||1||
(Salok Mehlaa 1, page 497)

naanak manmukh bolan vaa-o.
(Raag Ga-orhee Gu-aarayree Mehlaa 1, page 151)

naanak moorakh ayhi gun bolay sadaa vinaas. ||1||
(Mehla 1 Salok, page 143)

naanak bhaa-ay bhagat nistaaraa dubiDhaa vi-aapai doojaa. ||2||
(Sireeraag Mehlaa 1, page 75)

naanak fikai boli-ai tan man fikaa ho-ay.
(Salok Mehlaa 1, page 473)

naanak dunee-aa kee-aa^N vadi-aa-ee-aa^N agee saytee jaal.
(Salok Mehla 2, page 1290)

naanak a-ogun jayt-rhay taytay galee janjeer.
(Sorath Mehlaa 1 Ghar 1 Cha-upday, page 595)

naanak a-ugan veesray gur raakhay pat taahi. ||4||15||
(Sireeraag Mehlaa 1, page 20)

Today, when we are going to celebrate the 550th. birth anniversary of Guru Nanak the rulers are like bloody tigers and dogs even today. The entire focus of the governments is focused on the top ten or fifteen minions. The farmers and laborers of Punjab are committing suicides today. The honor of our daughters and sisters is not safe today. The climate i.e. air, water

and soil have become poisonous. We invited this curse on us due to abdicating the teachings of Guru Nanak. Still we can find a way out of this black hole by analyzing the teachings of the Master in modern context. The Guru can become a bridge between both the Punjabs. Rather than threatening each other with atom bombs, let us resort to the rabab.

THE CONCEPT OF ALAUHNIS IN NANAK'S BANI

Research Scholar : Sukhdeep Kaur
Punjabi University, Patiala.

Apart from founding Sikhism Guru Nanak Dev introduced the stream of Gurmat poetry. Whatever philosophic, metaphysical and ethical concepts he expounded were later followed and carried forward by the gurus who fell in the line of succession. Thus the tradition of linking *bani* to the classical ragas of Indian music too was also taken ahead by the gurus. As many as 958 hymns of Guru Nanak are enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib. He composed *bani* in 19 out of total 31 ragas.

Guru Nanak Dev made a very effective use of poetry and music to express his spiritual experience. The guru gave a new shape to the values and rites linked to the life of free man. The rites and traditions contribute a lot towards forming the subconscious of man. The subconscious in turn keeps control over his conscious mind. He tried to bring about a reformation in the conduct of man by composing *banis* in genres like *vars*, *goshts*, *suchajjis*, *kuchajjis* and *alauhnis*. The *alauhnis* also attempt to program man in a particular direction.

Alauhnis: *Alauhnis* are the words spoken after the death of a person in his praise. These are recited both individually and collectively. According to Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, the writer of *Gurshabd Ratnakar* has described *alauhni* as poetry of praise or condolence of someone who has passed away. Through *alauhnis* the guru has given a distinct and new ideology.

The Concept of Death: The guru is of the firm view that the death of man is pre-determined. There is no scope of any change or reformation in it. Therefore, as the last moment comes, man has to leave. Sheikh Farid too had expressed similar views on the concept of death:

jind vahutee maran var lai jaasee parnaa-ay.

aapan hathee jol kai kai gal lagai Dhaa-ay.

(salok saykh fareed kay, page 1377)

Gur Nanak Dev ji too has started his *alauhnis* as under:

Dhan sirandaa sachaa paatisaahu jin jag DhanDhai laa-i-aa.
muhlat punee paa-ee bharee jaanee-arhaa ghat chala-i-aa.
jaanee ghat chala-i-aa likhi-aa aa-i-aa runnay veer sabaa-ay.

kaa^N-i-aa hans thee-aa vaychhorhaa

jaa^N din punnay mayree maa-ay.

(Raag vad-hans mehlaa 1 ghar 5 alaahane-aa, page 578)

The guru's *bani* also describes the post-death bliss. He says that death must not be condemned. Nor we should be afraid of death as it is after death only that we are rewarded by God for our noble deeds. Man attains communion with God after death which makes Soul attain the ultimate bliss.

maran na mandaa lokaa aakhee-ai jay mar jaanai aisaa ko-ay.
sayvihi saahib samrath aapnaa panth suhaylaa aagai ho-ay.
(Vad-hans Mehlaa 1, page 579)

Enunciating the concept of death the guru says the death of only those who accept death on their own on the basis of their principles, is meaningful and glorious. Here he describes the concept of a martyr as well. The need for martyrdom arose much later in Sikhism but the guru knew that to tread the unbeaten track of revolution preparation for martyrdom is a must. That is why he has glorified the death of a martyr.

maran munsaa soori-aa hak hai jo ho-ay maran parvaano.
sooray say-ee aagai aakhee-ahi dargeh paavahi saachee maano.
dargeh maan paavahi pat si-o jaaveh aagai dookh na laagai.
kar ayk Dhi-aavahi taa^N fal paavahi jit sayvi-ai bha-o bhaagai.
(Vad-hans Mehlaa 1, page 579)

Giving a new dimension to the Indian philosophy on life, Guru Nanak Dev ji describes life as a play of the Divine. Therefore, death too, should be accepted as an integral part of the game. He writes:

naanak kis no baabaa ro-ee-ai baajee hai ih sansaaro.
keetaa vaykhai saahib aapnaa kudrat karay beecharo.
(Vad-hans Mehlaa 1, page 580)

As regards death the guru says that man should always keep ready to embrace death at the call of the Providence. The departing person should be given farewell with blessings the way we do at the time of sending our daughter to her in-laws' house at the time of her marriage. Death becomes a catalyst to bring together human soul and God.

God: Guru Nanak Dev has enunciated also the concept of God in *alauhnis*. The guru reveres God as omnipotent. The world is a manifestation of His creativity. He says:

**dhaahay dhaahi usaaray aapay hukam savaaranhaaro.
jo tis bhaavai samrath so thee-ai heelrhaa ayhu sansaaro. ||3||
(Vad-hans Mehlaa 1, page 579)**

The creative potential of God is infinite. He manages the process of coming to this world and going back. If He gets merciful, he liberates His children from this bondage of birth and rebirth e.g.

**aavaa gavan sirji-aa too thir karnaihaaro.
jaman marnaa aa-ay ga-i-aa baDhik jee-o bikaaro.
(Vad-hans Mehlaa 1, page 580)**

The Master or guru can be recognized by shabd which has caused the creation of this entire cosmos. He Himself is the knower of his *modus operandi*. The guru writes:

**jin thaapee biDh jaanai so-ee ki-aa ko kahai vakhaano.
jin jag thaap vataa-i-aa jaalo so saahib parvaano. ||1||
(Vad-hans Mehlaa 1, page 581)**

Simran: *Simran* is the best way for attaining communion with God. According to Guru Nanak this world is the Creation of true and omnipotent God. He is omnipresent also. The life of only that person, who remembers God with all concentration, is meaningful in this world. It is only the *simran* which helps man get liberated from the unending chain of births and rebirths. The remembrance of God makes this task easier. This easy path will

get you the desired fruit. One who approaches God with the offering of *simran* gets rewarded:

**panth suhaylai jaavhu taa^N fal paavhu aagai milai vadaa-ee.
bhaytai si-o jaavhu sach samaavahu taa^N pat laykhai paa-ee.**

(Vad-hans Mehlaa 1, page 579)

On the basis of above discussion we can say that death is no punishment at all. Rather, it is a gateway for reaching the destination or actual home of man. Those who are always ready to lay down their life in the realization of their ideals they are in a way heading towards the field of death to eliminate oppression. Instead of crying over the death of such a person we should sing praises to God on this occasion.

GURU NANAK- THE REBEL

Harinder Kaur Baling
Mohali (Punjab)

Guru Nanak Dev is not just a name. It is an indicator of transformation, a set of ideas and a movement. It was revolutionary movement which transformed the very belief system and life style of the contemporary society. He enkindled a new ray of hope in the people. The adjective 'revolutionary' is not used for the guru as he is treated mostly as a spiritual leader. But in reality he was a revolutionary who brought about a seismic transformation in the thinking pattern of those enmeshed in the net of superstitions. The social structure of his times was awfully plagued with the curse of casteism. The plight of so-called lower castes was pitiable. No respect was ever given to them. The commoners were caught in the rich-poor gulf. The poor shudras were subjected to great humiliation. Guru Nanak not only patronized the deprived downtrodden segment of society but instilled a new confidence in them. In spite of being a great spiritual leader he spent the life of an ordinary householder and spent the later period of his life tilling the land, at Kartarpur. Irrespective of the divine powers he was equipped with, the guru worked hard in the fields and condemned the irrelevant rituals and miracles.

According to scholars he was born great and a chosen son of Mehta Kalu. The father had pinned great hopes on him. He wanted his only son to hold the reins of business and enlighten the name of his family. Therefore, with an intention to engage him in different worldly pursuits he gave Nanak a sum of twenty rupees for initiating some trade. But feeding a band of hungry mendicants he delivered the message that nothing is holier than feeding a hungry stomach. Despite being the son of an affluent father he conducted all his journeys on foot rather than using horses or a chariot. During his odysseys he ate simple food and put up at the humble homes of the poor. He visited the shrines of all religions. He was such a great thinker and orator he exchanged his views with the contemporary Sufis, saints, fakirs, recluses,

pundits, qazis etc.

He was second to none in creative writing as well. He wrote poetry in 19 different ragas. Nanak was not only a messenger of peace but he very dauntlessly complained to God against the oppression of Babar.

He was of the view that instead of tolerating so much of tyranny we should raise voice against it. But fear and greed cripple the mind of man. In friendship he broke all the man made barriers of caste and creed and proceeded on his quest for truth in the company of two friends. Mardana was elder to the guru but was comparatively of lower caste. This brotherly bonding was unprecedented.

Going to the forests for meditation by abandoning home and family life was in vogue during those days. He not only opposed it but spent a householder's life himself to exemplify what he taught. He preached that rather than going to the jungles one should lead a life of hard work as a householder and partake with the needy whatever is earned. So he would keep the grain of his needs at home and distribute the rest among the poor. So by following the three principles of toil, distribution and remembrance of God he gave a revolutionary thought to the then society.

The best example of justice and impartiality came to the fore when he deprived his own son of the spiritual seat and handed it over to Bahi Lehna, one of his true devotees.

He did not stop us from earning wealth nor did he ask us to leave the world. He urged his followers to lead a life of fraternal love in deference to the laws of nature. God, he said. Permeated each mote of dust but remains invisible to the naked eyes like ghee remains hidden in milk. His teachings are more relevant today than they were in his own times.

RAGA NAAD, NANAK BANI AND GURMAT MUSIC

Harpal Singh Sewak
Sri Bhaini Sahib

The 550th. birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev ji is being celebrated the world over with great religious fervor by the Sikh organizations and those dealing with Punjabi culture. In this context the publication of a string of articles on the great spiritual Master is a commendable venture.

Guru Nanak Dev was a versatile personality, an epoch maker who gave way to an all-embracing culture in Punjab. The dictums like 'Be fearless', 'Have no enemies', 'Work hard,' 'Partake what you earn with others' and 'Always remember God' were the main constituents of this culture. In the words of Prof. Puran Singh,

***"Punjab na Hindu na Mussalmaan
Punjab jeenda guran de naam te."***

(Punjab is neither Hindu nor Mussalmaan. Punjab survives and thrives in the name the gurus.) He was such a loving and heart-conquering personality that he could become a bridge to unite Hindus and Muslims who, since centuries had been mutually antagonistic. He taught the lesson of nobility and uprightness to all:

Puchhan phol kitab no Hindu vadda ki musalmaanoi.

Baba aakhe hajia subh amlan baajho dono roi.

And

Ek pita ekas ke hum baarik

The most important among the aspects of Guru Nanak Dev ji's life is the following:

Raag roop Guru Nanak Dev.

The guru salvaged the *kaliyuga* (the age of darkness) but what did he do or write?

'Siri raag mahalla 1' - 'Moti te mandir usarahi'- First he brought Siri raga, i.e. the music of love.

**raag naad sabh sach hai keemat kahee na jaa-ay.
raagai naadai baahraa inee hukam na boojhi-aa jaa-ay.
(Salok Mehlā 4, page 1423)**

You cannot comprehend the divine verdict without *shabd*, without raga which has an attraction of its own. Why did the animals come flocking to the baba when he used to sing in the desolate forest area somewhere? Raga is something which makes even the blood curdling cobra dance on its rhythm.

We shall discuss the contribution of Guru Nanak Dev ji towards music by dividing it into three phases- Raga naad, Nanak Bani and Gurmat music.

Raga Naad or Indian Classical Music:

There are six great treasures of Indian knowledge generated thousands of years ago-

1. Philosophy (Spiritual)
2. Jayotish Shastra (Astrology)
3. Ayurveda
4. Yoga Shastra
5. Vaastu Shastra
6. Shastri Sangeet (Classical Music)

In spite of passage of thousands of years these treasures of knowledge are still relevant. Even today anybody having command on any one of these six is paid reverence. But here, our area of discussion is music. Some wise person has rightly pinpointed the value poetry saying:

"God had written poetry 100 years before created this world."

But before creation what reverberated in the air was *anahat naad* (unstruck music). That is why everything in nature is musical. The movement of Sun, Moon, stars with a single rhythm, the sweet murmur of flowing rivers and cascades, tossing of tree tufts in the breeze, the tweets of birds, flashes of lightning and thunder of clouds all belong to a divine scheme of unstruck music. The devotion through music is the equanimous

path of getting in communion with God. It is a diet of the soul. The commonest lingua franca of the universe is music. Music is not just humming or singing something. Unless disciplined or restrained in the rhyme or rhythm of something, it ceases to be music at all.

Having abandoned the comfort zone of family life in quest of the meaning of life and death the emaciation of six years and atrocious austerities had reduced Gautam Buddha to almost a skeleton. A band of devotional musicians passed by him singing a song that meant: "Don't tighten the strings of your instrument so as to break them and also don't keep them so loose that they refuse to produce musical notes." These were the words which opened the inner eye of Gautam and he made it a guiding principle of his life. He grasped the inlaid message:

"Don't let your mind get entangled in the comforts and vices so much that you forfeit the music of life and also don't go in for so austere a way of penance that it consumes you. The proper tuning of the stringed instrument is necessary for producing melodious notes.

The music disciplined with rhythm has three parts: Vocal, Instrumental and Dance. Lord Krishna's flute, chorus, dance of the Gopis, Raas Leela has kept the thousand years old culture stringed together till date. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth guru gives a beautiful portrayal of Raas Leela in his Krishnavtar:

*Maagh bateet bhaye rut phagun aai gayi sabh khelat hori.
Gaavat geet bajaavat taal kahe much te bharuan mili jori.
Daarat hai alita banita chhatka sang maarat baisan thori.
Khelat syam dhamaar anoop maha mili sunder saanwal gori.*

And

*Sorath sarang au gujri lalta aru bhairav Deepak gave.
Todi au megh malaar alaapat gond au sudh malaar sunaave.
Jaitsiri aru malsiri au parjas raag siri that pave.
Syam kahe hari ji rijh ke murli sang kotak raag bajaave.*

Here my purpose is not to discuss the technical aspects of music. I only want to share my views on the divine message delivered by Guru Nanak Dev ji through the medium of music. Dr.

Rajinder Prasad, the first Prime Minister of independent India has said, "The power and influence of music must be utilized for the welfare of mankind." Why only music, all kinds of education should aim at human welfare. "*Vidya veechari taan parupkari.*" It can never be mankind-friendly if the very motive behind getting it is greed, selfishness or egoism. A micron of arrogance devours the fragrance of education:

*Jeekan hing kathoori de vich chhitt mari rurh jaaye
Te maran sugandhian.*

So this was the sort of degeneration before Guru Nanak Dev appeared on the scene. Religion which otherwise is supposed to open the gateway of salvation for man had become itself sick with the virus of superstitions and absurd rites and rituals. It had become commercialized:

**lai bhaarh karay vee-aahu.
kadh kaagal dasay raahu.
sun vaykhu lokaa ayhu vidaan.
man anDhaa naa-o sujaan. ||4||**

(Mehlai 1, page 471)

In raga Maajh the guru says that the kings have turned into butchers. Religion has flown out of the window. It is the pitch dark of falsehood that rules the roost. The moonlight of truth is not seen anywhere:

**kal kaatee raajay kaasaa-ee Dharam pankh kar udri-aa.
koorh amaavas sach chandarmaa deesai naahee kah charhi-aa.
(Salok Mehlai 1, page 145)**

Those disengaged with this sinful world have said good bye to their home and taken refuge in the mountain caverns in search of occult powers.

Similarly, music which used to be a means of attaining God had become immersed in the orgies of royal life. It was in such an atmosphere of darkness that the guru emerged as a savior with the result that the darkness of falsehood was dispelled. Bhai Gurdas says:

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**Satgur Nanak pargatia miti dhund jag chanan hoaa.
Jeo kar sooraj niklia tare chhape andher paloaa.**

The guru gave a very vivid description of salvation from superstition and rituals in the name of religion:

ghaal khaa-ay kichh hathahu day-ay.

naanak raahu pachhaaneh say-ay. ||1||

(Salok Mehlaa 1, page 1245)

Toiling with the sweat of brow and then donating a share of it to the needy. Only such a person can set his foot on the path of ultimate Truth. He showed mankind the path of God by himself remaining a householder. He remained immune to the shackles of the mundane in his household just as a lotus flower remains unsullied even in the mud. In a way he freed spirituality from the dense forests and mountain caves by bringing it back to the practical life. Similarly, the guru liberated raga from the courts of kings and brought it in the reach of common man. He made it a medium of attaining the Supreme. From the addiction to liquor he made his followers addicted to the holy name of the Lord.

Bhai Gurdas writes about how Guru Nanak Dev saw the common folks steeped deep into superstitions of various hues:

Baba dekhe dhyan dhari jalti sabh prithvi dis aaee.

Bajhahu guru gubaar hai, hai hai kardi suni lokai.

Babey bhekh banaya udasi ki reet chalaai.

Charhya sodhan dharti lokai.

When the guru set out on his odysseys for the welfare of mankind he took Mardana along and conferred the sobriquet of "Bhai" on him. In 'Janamsakhis' there is a frequent mention of the Master saying to Mardana:

"Mardanya! Chher Rabab, bani aai hai."

(Mardana, tune your rebec, bani has dawned on me)

"Mardane rabab uthaya, Babe shabd uthaya."

(Mardana picked his rebec while the Master started singing.)

Mardana then played his rebec in the raga in which the guru was to sing. The jungle would start throbbing with the

divine melody. The birds and animals would feel spell bound and juice oozed from the trees. Bhai Santokh Singh writes in "Nanak Parkash":

***Bhayi aawaaz tu hi 'nirankara, nirankar kartara'.
Tih peeche Sri Nanak binate hovahi taar majhaara.
Bhaye prem mein pasu panchhi sabh mohe mann udyana.
Truvar t eras nichuran laagyo visra sabhan apaana.***

Rebec playing would become an occasion for the dawn of *bani*. Divine poetry is an eternal source of love. It is a combination of literature and music, light and fragrance.

Knowledge alone makes you an erudite while love alone makes you crazy. But the one with love and knowledge both in his heart turns out to be the Messiah, the path finder of the world. Knowledge puts an end to all duality, dilemma and discrimination but love inspires man on the path of philanthropy. Love is the only way for the Soul to become one with the Supreme.

Jin prem kiyo tin hi prabh payo.

Thus love or raga is the medium for dissolution with God. The listeners are also imbued with the tinge of the raga performer provided the performer is all love during rendition of raga. The guru writes about himself in raga Maru that sometimes it happens like this:

***ko-ee aakhai bhootnaa ko kahai baytaalaa.
ko-ee aakhai aadme naanak vaychaaraa. ||1||
bha-i-aa divaanaa saah kaa naanak ba-uraanaa.
(Maaroo Mehlaa 1, page 991)***

At the end of this *shabd* he writes:

***ta-o dayvaanaa jaanee-ai jaa bhai dayvaanaa ho-ay.
aykee saahib baahraa doojaa avar na jaanai ko-ay. ||2||
(Maaroo Mehlaa 1, page 991)***

This is how the guru sang in different ragas. All poetic *rasas* viz. Prem Ras, Biraha Ras, Shingar Ras, Bir Ras, Bhagti Ras become manifest through their rendition in ragas. Gurbani is an excellent work of poetry. Gur Nanak describes himself as 'shayar'

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(Dhanaasree Mehlaa 1, page 660)

karay karaa-ay sabh kichh jaanai
naanak saa-ir iv kahi-aa. ||35||1||
(Raag Aasaa Mehlaa 1, page 434)

But the guru was different from the great poets of the world. If we go through the diaries of poets like Tagore, we shall see that he would whet his poems twice or thrice before sending the script for publication. But in the case of Guru Nanak Dev ji, whenever he was asked something he would reply in song. The musical reply being replete with divinity and sweetness of raga, it would do away with all the doubts and suspicions of the questioner and make him bow his head in reverence. It was due to this magical impact only that thugs like Sajjan turned into men of nobility, the robbers became donors, the cowards became soldiers and the atheists transformed into theists. He was an epoch maker musician. Before being poet he was great singer and musician. He himself describes himself as the bard of God in his writings:

ha-o dhaadhee vaykaar kaarai laa-i-aa.
raat dihai kai vaar Dharahu furmaa-i-aa.
dhaadhee sachai mahal khasam bulaa-i-aa.
sachee sifat saalaah kaprhaa paa-i-aa.
(Mehlaa 1, page 150)

3. Raga Maajh: Ashtpad, 43 shlokas, 27 Paudis' Var
4. Raga Gaudi: 2 Chaupadas, 1 Lu Ashtpadas, 2 Chhants
- Sr. Raga Asa: 1 So daru, 2 Chaupadas, 37 Chaupadas, 22 Ashtpadas, 2 Patti, Sr. Chhant, 42 Shlokas, 24 Paudis' Var
6. Raga Gujri: 2 Chaupadas, Sr. Ashtpadas
7. Raga Bihagada: 2 Shlokas and Var in Mahla 4
- Lu. Raga Wadhans: 3 Chaupadas, 7 Chhants (including alauhnis), 3 Shlokas in Mahla 4
8. Raga Sorath: 2 Chaupadas, 8 Ashtpadas, 2 Shlokas in Var Mahla 4

10. Raga Dhanasari: Lu Chaupadas, 1 Arti, 2 Ashtpadas, 3 Chhants
11. Raga Tilang: Sr. Chaupadas, 2 Ashtpadas
12. Raga Soohi: 8 Chaupadas, Sr. Ashtpadas (including 3 kafis) kuchajji and suchajji padas
13. Raga Bilawal: 4 Chaupadas, 2 Ashtpadas, 1 Thiti, 2 Chhants, 2 Shlokas
14. Raga Ramkali: 11 Chaupada, 8. Ashtpadas, 1 Deccan Onkar (4 padas), Siddh Gosht (73) Padas
15. Raga Maru: 12 Chaupadas, 11 Ashtpadas (including 2 kafis) 22 Sohilas, 17 Shlokas Var in Mahla 3
16. Raga Tukhari: Baramah, (11 Padas) Sr. Chaupadas
17. Raga Bhairav: Lu Chaupadas, 1 Ashtpada
18. Raga Basant: 12 Chaupadas, 1 Ashtpada
19. Raga Sarang: 3 Chaupadas, 2 Ashtpadas, 3 Shlokas (Var Mahla 1)
20. Raga Malhar: 8 Chaupadas, Sr. Ashtpadas, 24 Shlokas, 2 Lu paudis
21. Raga Parbhati and Vibhas: 17 Chaupadas, 7 Ashtpadas
22. Sahaskriti: 4 Shlokas 23, 33 Shlokas

The guru was a great singer and musician who knew how to compose songs, notation them, framing dialogues (Sidh Gosht) and distinguish between the Hero (God) and Heroine (Suchajji and Kuchajji). These are the symptoms of a great artist)

There are two schools in Indian classical music- Northern and Southern. Most of the guru's compositions are in Northern style while some are in Southern and still some others are a mélange of the two. He composed bani in 18 ragas of the Northern school- Siri Raga, Maajh, Gaudi, Asa, Gujri, Wadhans, Sorath, Dhanasari, Tilang, Soohi, Bilawal, Ramkali, Bhairau, Basant, Sarang, Malhar, Vibhas, Bihagada.

The six ragas of Deccan school include Ramkali Dakhani, Bilawal Dakhani, Wadhans Dakhani, Parbhati, Maru, Tukhari.

Three mixed ragas are Basant-Hindol, Parbhati-Vibhas, Asa Kafi.

He composed his bani in 29 ragas. The title of each of his writings is not the subject of treatment but the raga and at some places there is a directive regarding the tune to be adopted e.g.

Asa di Var is supposed to be sung in Tunde Asraje di dhuni.

The successors of Guru Nanak have used the name of the first Master only, not their own name in their writings. The fifth guru put the ragas in an order while including the compositions of the gurus prior to him, his own writings and those of the saints and sages from other faiths while editing Guru Granth Sahib. The kernel message of the entire bani is the philosophy of Guru Nanak only. The inclusion of the writings of those from other faiths is what makes Guru Granth Sahib the most unique scripture in the world. It propagates the message of universal fraternity. This is the only scripture which is governed by ragas i.e. a perfect combination of literature and music.

Osho Rajnish writes, "Guru Nanak attained God by singing." When Gur Nanak sings, he is joined by the forces of the universe as well. He writes in Raga Asa:

so dar tayraa kayhaa so ghar kayhaa jit bahi sarab samaalay.
 vaajay tayray naad anayk asankhaa
 kaytay tayray vaavanhaaray.
 kaytay tayray raag paree si-o kahee-ahi
 kaytay tayray gaavanhaaray.
 gaavan tuDhno pavan paanee baisantar
 gaavai raajaa Dharam du-aaray.

.....
 gaavan tuDhno khand mandal barahmandaa
 kar kar rakhay tayray Dhaaray.

(Raag Aasaa Mehlaa 1, page 8)

Nanak bani gives a beautiful description of the Creator and His creation i.e. Nature.

kudrat pa-un paanee baisantar kudrat Dhartee khaak.
sabh tayree kudrat too^N kaadir kartaa paakee naa-ee paak.
(Mehlaa 1, page 464)

The creation of God is true as also the praises sung for Him:

sachee tayree sifat sachee saalaah.
 sachee tayree kudrat sachay paatisaah.

(Salok Mehlaa 1, page 463)

When Guru Nanak sings the praises to God he finds the entire universe joining him. He envisions sky as a big platter with Moon and Sun as lamps in it. The platter shimmers with innumerable stars and the air fans. The floral vegetation serves as incense in the cosmic *arti* and the universe as a whole is singing. Entranced in this state, the guru says,

**kaisee aartee ho-ay. bhav khandnaa tayree aartee.
anhataa sabad vaajant bhayree. ||1|| rahaa-o.**

(Raag Dhanaasree Mehlaa 1, page 13)

Guru Nanak Dev is an eternal light to keep guiding the mankind for all the ages to come. Before abandoning his physical frame he transferred his mantle to Bhai Lehna who was later known as Guru Angad Dev.

Gurbani is an eternal truth which comes true on the scientific criterion as well. Its understanding makes man free of all attachment and illusion. It is the scripture of the Masters and Master of the scriptures. There are three aspects of music- vocal, instrumental and dance. Nanak's *bani* mentions all the three of these. He praises God by singing in the form of *keertan* which ever since became an integral part of Sikh life. Bhai Gurdas writes about Guru Nanak Dev's time:

***Ghar ghar andar dharmsaal hove keertan sada vasoaa.
Ate ghar ghar baba gaaviye vajan taal mridang rababa.***

Instrumental music

The first musical instrument of Gurmat music is the rebeck or *rabab*. While setting out on odysseys Guru Nanak Dev takes along Mardana, the rebeck player. Thereafter, toeing the tradition Guru Arjun Dev, Guru Har Gobind and Guru Gobind Singh also made use of musical instruments like *saranda*, *taus*, *taanpura* etc. along with *tabla* and *mridang*. Harmonium is an incomplete instrument for Indian music with the result that there is no mention of it in Gurmat music during the guru-period. It is a western instrument which came to India with the English.

Dance

While showering praises on God it has been directed:

naach ray man gur kai aagai.
gur kai bhaanai naacheh taa sukh paavahi
antay jam bha-o bhaagai. rahaa-o.

(Goojree Mehlaa 3 Ghar 1, page 506)

Guru Nanak Dev writes in raga Asa:

raag naad nahee doojaa bhaa-o.
it rang naachahu rakh rakh paa-o. ||2||

(Aasaa Mehlaa 1, page 350)

And

tayraa jan nirat karay gun gaavai.
rabaab pakhaavaj taal ghunghroo
anhad sabad vajaavai. ||1|| rahaa-o.
parathmay man parbo Dhai apnaa paachhai avar ree jhaavai.
(Aasaa Mehlaa 5, page 381)

Music is the common language of the globe. Wherever Guru Nanak Dev ji went during his tours, he would use music as a means of communication. As per one particular anecdote, the guru went to a particular place where women were drawing water from the well. Their language was not understandable.

"Baba, which place we have come to? We don't understand their language and they don't follow ours? What shall we do here?" Mardana said.

"Bhai ji, it's Saurashtra. Sorathi seems to be the raga of this place. So, you play sorathi, you will be understood." The guru replied. Thus the guru used music as lingua franca. He wrote gurbani also in local ragas, seasonal ragas and folk-tunes. The Gurbani could be propagated far and wide only due to its being notaioned in different ragas.

Although, the tenth Master Guru Gobind Singh has his own granth called 'Dasam Granth' which includes the eulogies of God, Chandi Chritra, Bachitra Natak, Pauranic parables and

Chritropakhyan etc. But in this granth also, on Guru Nanak Dev's pattern, the guru has composed bani in 18 ragas. Here also we find mention of three aspects of music. Like Guru Nanak and Guru Arjun Dev, the tenth guru too has made use of dhrupad khyal gayan and different styles of singing in folk tunes. In raga Ramkali Guru Gobind Singh mentions divine music at an elevated spiritual stage in the shabd "Re mann eh bidh jog kamao:

Baje param taat tatu hari ko

Upje raag rasaram.

Ughte taan tarang rangi ati

Gyan geet bandhanam.

Chaki chaki dev daanav muni

Chhak chhak byom bivanam.

Atam updes bhej sanjam ko

Jaap su ajapa jape.

Sada rahe kanchan si kaya

Kaal na kabahu byape.

Paying obeisance to different forms of Akalpurkh the tenth guru says:

Namast sat raage

(My greetings to the raga and creator of ragas)

Namo geet geete

(My greetings to the song and creator of song)

Namo taan taane

(My greetings to the taan {tune} and creator of taan)

Namo nrit nrite

(My greetings to the dance and creator of dance)

Namo naad naade

(My greetings to the music and creator of music)

Namo saaz saaze

(My greetings to the musical instruments and creator of musical instruments)

All the gurus have toed the line of the first Master for propagating the gurmat ideology. Gurmat has music at heart and knowledge in its mind.

On the occasion of celebration of Guru Nanak 's 550th.

birth anniversary today, the condition of his philosophy and music is quite dismal. Gurbani has been reduced to the parrot like repetition of recitations rather than understanding it. The Sikh conduct is not in accordance with Gurbani. The scripture is wrapped in silken scarves like an idol. Keertan too has become a profession today. Raghbir Singh writes about the prevailing situation of music in Sikh society:

"The stringed instruments have been displaced with harmonium now. Since the last decades of nineteenth century harmonium has become popular. With hereditary *rabab* players and ragis becoming an extinct species these days it has been observed that the cinema and TV tunes have tempted both the *keertan* performers and the *sangat*. In this fast changing phase of life the tradition of singing *gurbani* as per the pristine style has been preserved commendably by the *namdharis*. They got their youths trained by the doyens of Gurmat music. Some other institutions viz. Guru Gobind Singh Study Circle Ludhian and Jawaddi Taksal of Baba Sucha Singh (who founded 'Vismad Naad') also followed suit. The goal of these institutions is to propagate the traditional *keertan* style.

In namdhari sect the Sikh face, philosophy, tradition and keertan style are preserved in their purity. Satgur Jagjit Singh propagated gurmat tenets of Guru Nanak Dev, the impeccable pronunciation of gurbani and keertan tradition at a large scale during his tenure of guruship (1959-2012). Here is an excerpt from the discourse of Satguru Jagjit Singh, "Try to ensure that your children learn Punjabi and read gurbani. The mission of Guru Nanak means giving up violence, helping the needy and protecting the weak." The namdhari chief wanted every youth of his sect to be well versed in gurbani and he stressed upon rendition of bani in the ragas ordained by the Sikh masters.

References:

1. Lal Ehi Rattan-2, P.60-61
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STORY OF DAULATMAND

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Daulatmand means rich and what does rich mean? It means sovereign, king, chieftain or man of affluence. It means generous also as richness is just sham without generosity. Sikh prayer has a wish, "***Khalsa ji ke bol bale***" These are the words by which God is beseeched to make the word of the *khalsa* so strong as to be accepted Bala means strong. In Iran I was very often asked, "Who is the *sardar* of your university? Who is the *sardar* of Punjab these days?" I was caught in a fix wondering what to tell them. Then the Iranians told me that the word '*sardar*' means chief. So they were asking who our Vice-Chancellor was and who our Chief Minister was. We are the strange sardars of the world who are not wary of our position.

In this article we are to share the story of an affluent man whose 550th birth anniversary is being celebrated throughout the world. Revolving round the parable of 'Sacha Sauda (true bargain)', this story will drift apart too far. I am not going to narrate that story to you. We have been listening to this story since childhood.

Father Mehta Kalu informed Kalyan Rai that the boy had squandered the money given to him and not brought merchandise for the shop. Having come home he asked, "Where is Nanak now?"

"He's worshipping God on the bank of the pond outside the village." Came the answer. The irate father rushed out of home hastily. Nanaki also followed him with a hasty step. As he saw his father coming Nanak got on his feet by way of respect.

"What did you do with twenty rupees?" The father asked.

"Father, you had asked me to strike a true bargain and this is what I did. The hungry mendicants asked for food and I gave it to them." Hearing this, the father gave the son two hard slaps on both cheeks. Some drops of tears appeared from the son's eyes and fell on the bank of the pond. Nanaki held her father by his hand and said, "Pita ji, should we go home?" I paused for some time after reading about this concern of the sister for her brother.

The scriptures of the world say that this world is just like a caravan *serai* for us. Our real home is somewhere else. It's only some fortunate one who reaches there. Father could not, perhaps. The story writer did a great favor by recording this sentence of Bibi Nanaki.

Rai Bular Khan was a big landlord- the owner of dozens of villages. The father worked as *patwari* under him for the management of his landed property. He felt sad to hear about this incident. He sent a servant to Mehta Kalu's house and called him to his *haveli*. The servant obeyed but returned telling that he was not at home Rai then sent two servants directing them strictly to fetch Mehta Kalu wherever he was along with Nanak. After all, Talwandi was just a small village.

Both- father and son- reached *haveli*. Rai embraced the boy and looking towards his father said, "Mehta ji, I had asked you not to speak harsh to this boy. You have wronged him today."

"Sir, I sent him to school, he didn't continue with his studies. He was sent for grazing the cattle and he didn't pay any attention in that also. Then I thought of opening a shop for him and sent him to market for purchasing merchandise but see, he has wasted as huge an amount as twenty rupees." Mehta Kalu replied. Rai asked the servant to go inside and bring twenty rupees from his wife. The servant obeyed and came back with money. Giving it to the father, Rai Bular said, "Mehta ji, please take it as compensation for monetary loss."

Refusing to accept money Mehta Kalu said, "Sir, the question is not that of money. What's the difference between your money and my money. It's all the same."

"Then why did you go hard on this angel if it's not a question of money?"

"Sir, today he has wasted twenty rupees, tomorrow he will fritter away a bigger amount. Don't we have a right to teach sense of responsibility to our children?"

"Mehta ji, you are not seeing what I see very clearly. The wealth of the entire world will flow through the hands of this child." Rai Bular said and added, "Mehta ji, I am Muslim and you are a Hindu. I am silent because of your disrepute in society otherwise sometimes I feel like bringing this child to my home."

For you he is your son but I know Khuda Himself has descended on earth to talk to us. My Talwandi lives with the grace of Nanak only."

The guru joined a job as Manager at Modikhana in Sultanpur. After some months the parents came to see him from Talwandi. Nanaki met her parents gladly. While talking Mehta ji asked Nanaki, "Does Nanak make some saving also or spends away all?"

"Pita ji, he wastes if he earns. But now he does not waste your money. We don't like this attitude of yours." Nanaki said.

Once the parents sent Bhai Mardana to Sultanpur with the message for Nanak that the family misses him badly. Nanak said, "You are right. We have a big family there. We shall go together."

One day handing over rabab to Mardana, Nanak said, "You are gifted with the talent of the string. Don't ever sell it. Never return any seeker empty handed from your door." It made Mardana laugh.

"Which seeker will come to me- the pauper?" Bhai Mardana asked. "The wealth that you have got today will arouse the envy of the world." The guru said.

In Iran there is a three-storied historical gurdwara- a place where Guru Nanak had a night stay. Metro train passes from a distance of half kilometer. On metro station- gurdwara road there is a magnificent gate. When asked I was told by the people that the civil engineers, designers and wealthy people of Iran volunteered to build the gate. So it was built by the Iranians. When it came to naming the gate the Iranians said, "Tell us something about your first Master. The people started telling sakhis to them. As they told that the guru never kept any money with him they jumped at the conclusion saying, "We got a name. There is none as rich as the man who never had any money in his pocket. It means he dedicated all his wealth to the needy. He is the giver before whom the world is a beggar. So let's name this gate as "Darwaza-e-Dault" (The Gate of Wealth). The needy will pass through this gate with bowed heads and get riches of the world."

It is also a co-incidence that the name of midwife who helped Nanak see the light of the day was also Bibi Daultan. My obeisance at the feet of such wealthy souls.

MILES TO GO AS YET

Dr. Harpreet Singh Preet
Sirhind (Punjab)

At that time it was not for everybody to understand Guru Nanak who was in love with nature in totality. It was not an easy task to remove from the eyes of strayed humanity the veils of falsity, enmity, deceit, jealousy, arrogance, anger and sin in general and then put it on the right track of truthfulness and philanthropy. Nobody but Nanak could do so in a unique and facile manner.

Guru Nanak had become a renegade at a very small age and opposed tooth and nail the hypocrisy and just hollow rituals masquerading as religion. How could those shrouded irretrievably in casteism and illiteracy understand the wisdom of the Master who was far ahead of his times. What to speak of his times, we fail to grasp his message even today and are using religion for meeting our personal ends.

The 19 year-old Nanak made the family priest Pt. Hardyal familiar with the actual meaning of the sacred thread worn by the Hindus. He told them that the priest could hoodwink the society but not God. He said,

da-i-aa kapaah santokh soot jat gandhee sat vat.
ayhu janay-oo jee-a kaa ha-ee ta paaday ghat.
naa ayhu tutai naa mal lagai naa ayhu jalai na jaa-ay.
Dhan so maanas naankaa jo gal chalay paa-ay.

(Salok Mehlā 1, page 471)

While working in Daulat Khan Lodhi's Modikhana at Sultanpur one day his calculation ceased at number 13 and he kept repeating "tera....tera....tera....." ('Thirteen' as also 'Yours'). This was his way of communicating to the world that there is nothing to call 'mine' in the world. All belongs to Him only.

Once, he entered the river Kali Vein and remained in solitude for three days. Then he realized that it was not enough to preach truth by sitting at just one place. So he made up his mind to remain on odysseys as much as possible.

ik-oa^Nkaar
 sat naam karta purakh nirbha-o nirvair
 akaal moorat ajoonee saibha^N gur parsaad.
 (Japji Sahib)

According to Bhai Gurdas:

***Babey bhekh banaya udasi ki reeti chalai,
 Charhya sodhan dharti lokai.***

While in Sultanpur, Mardana also accompanied some relatives who came to see him. He was *mirasi* by caste but being deadly against the caste hierarchy the guru took him along as his personal *rababi* and started performing *keertan*. After the birth of two sons- Sri Chand and Lachhmi Chand- the guru set out on his journeys along with Mardana.

There is no unanimity as yet on the number of his travels but there is hardly any doubt about the places he visited and how he disseminated his message. Hw traveled to all the four sides for this mission but some historians treat the odyssey of East and Deccan as one. A probe into these historical places shows that they are right to a great extent.

The First Odyssey (1497- 1509)

1. Sayyadpur: From Sultanpur to Goindwal via Amritsar (These cities had not emerged then) he reached the house of Bhai Lalo, a poor carpenter. Malik Bhago an officer of the Pathan Faujdar of Sayyadpur took ill of it as Guru Nanak had preferred a low caste carpenter over him to be a guest. He asked the guru to join the feast hosted by him. It was here that the guru explained to him the difference between hard-earned and ill-begotten money by saying:

hak paraa-i-aa naankaa us soo-ar us gaa-ay.
 gur peer haamaa taa bharay jaa murdaar na khaa-ay.
 galee bhisat na jaa-ee-ai chhutai sach kamaa-ay.
 maaran paahi haraam meh ho-ay halaal na jaa-ay.
 naanak galee koorhee-ee koorho palai paa-ay. ||2||
 (Shlok Mehlaa 1, page 141)

Clarifying him the futility of caste based discrimination he said:

jaat janam nah poochhee-ai sach ghar layho bataa-ay.

saa jaat saa pat hai jayhay karam kamaa-ay.

(parbhaatee mehlaa 1, page 1330)

2. Tulamba: From Sayyadpur they reached Tulamba via Talwandi. A thug dressed in the attire of a fakir lived there. He had a serai for the stay of travelers in the premises of his residential mansion. Also, he had a temple and mosque in the complex for the guests of the inn to say their prayers. Whosoever stayed there, was looted, killed and buried. The guru said:

ujal kaihaa chilkanaa ghotim kaalrhee mas.

Dhoti-aa jooth na utrai jay sa-o Dhovaa tis. ||1||

sajan say-ee naal mai chaldi-aa naal chala^Nni^H.

jithai laykhaa mangee-ai tithai kharhay disann. ||1|| rahaa-o.

(Soohee Mehlaa 1 Ghar 6, page 729)

This hymn of the guru was an opener. He started repenting for his sins. The guru indoctrinated him in religion and converted the thug into a noble human being.

3. Pehowa to Kurukshetra: Regarding solar eclipse, the people have a number of superstitions like not to light the hearth, not to cook, not to eat or drink anything, not to take meat etc. The guru himself cooked the meat of the deer and delivered the message that life throbs in each and every plant and animate being in the universe. So we should eat to live rather than live to eat.

4. Panipat: Here, Guru Nanak Dev ji met the famous sufi Sheikh Id-ul-Kabir and had discussion with him on religion.

5. Hariduar: Throwing water towards the west, he communicated to them the message that if the water cannot reach his fields, it cannot reach the sun in any way. In Hariduar, the guru condemned the traditions like idol worship.

6. Gorakhmata(Now Nanakmata): In a discussion here, the guru made the *siddhas* familiar with the actual meaning of

religion and said that working honestly and service to others is the essence of religion.

7. Kashi (Banaras): Here he condemned idol- worship and made the pandas stick to the true religion saying that without purity of mind worship is just a futile exercise.

8. Kamroop, Assam: From Banaras he reached Kamroop state via Gaya and Patna. During those times the Assam, Meghalya, Bhutan, North Bengal and Northwestern Bangladesh formed together a single state named Kamroop. This place was awfully gripped with faith in practices like sorcery or exorcism. The Master weaned the spell casting beautiful women away from this path and made them familiar with a life based on human values. In Kamroop the guru traveled to places like Dhubri, Asades, Dhanasari valley, Gehai and Shillong.

9. Silhat and Dhaka: The conversation of Guru Nanak Dev ji with famous sufi leader Sheikh Jalal is well known. The place where he stayed in Dhaka is known as Rare Bazar.

10. Jagannathpuri: From Dhaka the guru reached Jagannathpuri via 24 Pargana (Calcutta) and Cuttack where he enunciated the actual *arti* of God:

raag Dhanaasree mehlaa 1.
aarti ik-oaNkaar satgur parsaad.
gagan mai thaal rav chand deepak banay
taarika mandal janak motee.
Dhoop mal-aanlo pavan chavro karay
sagal banraa-ay foolant jotee. ||1||
kaisee aartee ho-ay.
bhav khandnaa tayree aartee.
anhataa sabad vaajant bhayree. ||1|| rahaa-o.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib, page 13)

Through this hymn the guru told that the real arti is always going on at a cosmic level in the universe with the elements of nature engaged in it.

11. Kudappa: Journeying from Jagannathpuri to Deccan the guru came across a bhil named Kauda at Kudappa, 70 kilometer from Vijaywada (Andhra Pradesh). Kauda was a cannibal, known as Kauda-the *rakshasa* in some Brahminist writings. The guru stopped him from the demonic ways and won him over as a servant.

12. Vijay Nagar: This was the time when Orissa was under the rule of Pratap Rudra Dev who had to face sporadic attacks of the Bengal ruler Alauddin Hussain. He did not have pleasant relations with Vijay Nagar state in the Deccan either. But Guru Nanak Dev ji continued his odyssey even amidst such hostile conditions and entered Vijaynagar. King Narsimha Raya-2 of Saluvs sultanate reigned here during those days. He too was facing rebellion from his own commander 'Tuluva Narasa Niaca' (who ruled later from 1505 to 1509). The situation was not very comfortable. The caste-based discriminations were rampant and the tradition sati (i.e. self-immolation at the pyre of husband) too was in vogue. The guru condemned these social malpractices and kept going forward via Guntur, Kanchipuram, Thiruvanamalai and Trichnapali.

13. Lanka: Via Rameshvaram, the guru reached Lanka by sea route. It was known as Simhal Dweep at that time for it was inhabited with Simhali people then. Later, people from South India (Vijaynagar) started going to settle in Lanka and Simhalis moved towards South Lanka and Jaffna was set up in North. Buddhism was the dominant faith here. At one time, the guru reached Anuradhapur the former hub of Buddhism. Here the King Shivnabh got initiation from the Master. A petro-inscription found in the museum says that the king had a conversation with a some saint called Nanakacharya.

14. Ajmer: From Lanka the guru reached Ajmer via Rameshwaram, Trivendrum, Kotayam, Bidar, Nanded, Baroch, Rinar, Junagarh, Dwarka, Ujjain, Chittaurgarh etc. It was a citadel of sufis and yogis. The guru told them how the real yoga was

attained and what religion meant in real sense of the term.

15. Bikaner: It was the center of Jain monks who avoided taking even a bath lest some life is destroyed in the process. They used to drink filtered water so that not even a tiniest insect is swallowed by mistake. The guru dispelled all their fears and suspicions.

16. Mathura: From Bikaner he went to Mathura where we have a beautiful gurdwara "Nanak Bageechi" today. It is located on the right bank of Yamuna between Mathura and Vrindavan near Masani railway station. Here Guru Nanak Dev served water to the people himself. It became monumental later in the form of "Guru Nanak Piau" (water stall). Till 1950, the Udasis had their dera here but then it was taken over by Sri Guru Singh Sabha.

17. Pak Patan: From Mathura, the guru reached Pakpatan, the seat of Baba Farid. Now it was occupied by Sheikh Brahm, a sufi saint with whom the guru had a comprehensive conversation. Then after finishing the 12-year long traveling spree Guru Nanak Dev ji came back to Sultanpur, his home town.

After staying for some time in Sultanpur, Nanak's steps took him to Lahore where a rich businessman Duni Chand hosted a shradh as homage to his father. The guru told him that feeding the Brahmins would not reach their ancestors in the other world. The only wealth to be taken post-death to paradise is the virtue of working hard and sharing whatever you earn with the needy fellow beings. The guru said:

jay mohaakaa ghar muhai ghar muhi pitree day-ay.

agai vasat sinjaanee-ai pitree chor karay-i.

vadhee-ah hath dalaal kay musfee ayh karay-i.

naanak agai so milai je khatay ghaalay day-ay. ||1||

(Salok Mehlaa 1, page 472)

Under the guru's motivation Duni Chand turned his house into *dharmshala*. He started working hard and sharing his earning with the needy. Before setting out on his second odyssey, Guru Nanak got a town Kartarpur set up on the other side of Ravi. His father also came to settle here once for all with his family.

Second Odyssey (1514-1518)

1. Pir Buddhan Shah: Having crossed river Satluj on way from Kartarpur via Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur, Guru Nanak Dev ji met Pir Buddhan Shah.

2. Himachal: He reached Spiti valley via Bilaspur, Suket, Mandi, Riwalsar, Jwala ji, Kangra and Baijnath.

3. Tibet and Sumer Parbat: Crossing Shipki pass from Shipki the guru reached the mountain Sumer (Kailash) and preached to the Siddhas that rather than hiding in the caves of mountains they should go in for social service or altruism. Religion lies not in sitting hidden like this by running away from the world but in performing the duties as a social being. Working hard for livelihood always with the name of God in your heart and sharing your earnings with the needy is what is called religion, he told them. Along with other yogis, Bharthari also became his disciple.

4. Nanakin Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal: It is said that from Kailash Parbat the guru kept moving forward alongside Kali Nadi and reached Shakya Buddhist monastery in Tibet. There he helped in renovating the Buddhist monastery of Trasung Deochung. The stick gifted by Trasung to the guru is still lying safe in Lachen Gompha. Crossing Chhorten Nyima La pass he reached Sikkim, visited Dongmar and on return journey he reached Leh via Kathmandu, Uttrakhand, Khokhsar. Preaching his message there he reached Sri Nagar. Gurdwara Nanak Lama Chungbong and Guru Nanak Math in Sikkim and Kathmandu (Nepal) are witnesses to his odysseys.

5. Kashmir: Roaming about at several places here the guru reached Muttan (near Anant Naag) and camped at Martand fall. There he met Pandit Brahm Das who had a treasure of books. He was very proud of his knowledge. The guru says:

**parh parh gadee ladee-ah parh parh bharee-ah saath.
parh parh bayrhee paa-ee-ai parh parh gadee-ah khaat.
parhee-ah jaytay baras baras parhee-ah jaytay maas.**

parhee-ai jaytee aarjaa parhee-ah jaytay saas.
naanak laykhai ik gal hor ha-umai jhakh-naa jhaakh. ||1||
(salok mehlāa 1, page 467)

Listening to the guru his pride in the erudition evaporated. The guru entrusted him the task of propagating his message of universal love.

The Third Odyssey (1518-1522)

Before describing Guru Nanak Dev's odyssey to the west it is pertinent to understand the political situation of the west. (See map at page no. 240).

In far west, the reign of Mamlook dynasty which had been going on since 1382 had come to an end in 1517. At that time Shias and Sunnis used to live harmoniously in that state but now Ottoman Turk regime had got established with the result that it had turned into a bastion of fanatic Sunnis. Now the shias were escaping towards east. From 1517 to 1520 Sultan Salim took over the reins of state while thereafter Suleman became the ruler. Mecca and Medina formed a part of their state.

In the east of Turk state, Qoyunlu's sunni state had come to an end and the king Shah Isnael established Saifavid state. Kizelbash forces (now Azerbaijan and Iran) included Ustakal, Shamlu, Takelu, Zalkadir, Afsar, Kazar and Versak. They joined hands at a single call from Shah Ismael.

These forces vanquished Shirvan Shah Farukh Yassar at Cabani (now Sharmakhi Rayon). By crossing Kura river. Defeating Alwand, the Qoyunlu king at Sarur, the Kizelbash troops conquered this region and Saifavid state was established. On July 1501 Ismael was elevated as King and making Tabreez became the capital.

It happened because at that time Ec Qoyunlu and the Turk Ottoman regime had declared Shia sect of Muslims as illegal. So the Shiaites gathered en masse at once and they set up their own rule. For most of the Iranians this was quite a new faith but still they were accepted gleefully by all because it was comforting to

the common man's way of living. Painting, poetry, stucco work on metal, textile and carpet industry, music, merriment etc. everything was legalized. Rather than Mecca or Haj, the preference was now given to the Shia mosques. They declared Sunni segment of Islam as illegal. Shah Ismail himself was a poet and was a votary of *sufi* sect.

In the west of Saifavid there was Khurasan state with Balkh and Herat (now Afghanistan), Mash-had and Nishapur (now in Iran) as the main cities. In Khurasan the rule of Timur dynasty had come to an end in 1506 and politically this area was without any organized government. Big and small tribes were going willfully and the graph of crime was on the rise.

1. Mecca: Guru Nanak Dev ji began this journey in blue attire in the company of Bhai Mardana. From Kartarpur to Pak Patan, Multan, Uch, Sukar he reached Mecca by sea route via Sindh. This country was ruled by the fanatic Wahabis. It was not a child's play to sit with feet towards Kaaba in the midst of such a hostile environment. But the Master did it and removing the veil of superstition from their eyes he brought his point home that Allah exists everywhere. If He is towards Kaaba he is towards your back also. He is omnipresent and permeates every mote of dust. Bhai Gurdas says:

Ja baba sutta raati nau val mshraabe pair pasari.

Jeewani mari lati di, kehda sutta kufra kufari.

Latta val khudai de kyo kari paya hoi bajigari.

Tango pakad ghaseetya phiria macca kala dikhari.

Hoi hairan Karen juhari. (Var 1)

Next morning, Nanak had a discussion with the hajis where he dispelled all their confusions over the issues like who is bigger- Hindu or Mussalman. From among the hajis present on the occasion a haji Rukandeen treating him as his Master asked for his wooden sandals as a souvenir. It is said that pair of shoes is still preserved by the descendents of Rukandeen.

Dhari nisani kausi (kharaun) di

Makke andar pooji karai.

(Bhai Gurdas, Var-1, P.34)

*Puchhan gall eeman di qazi mullan ikatthe hoey.
 Vdda saang vartaya lakhi na sake koi.
 Puchhan phol kitab no hindu vadda ki mussalmaanoi.
 Babe aakhya hajia subh amlan bajhahu dono roi.
 Hindu mussalmaan dui dargahi andar lahani na dhoi.
 (Bhai Gurdas, Var-1, P.33)*

2. Madina and Baghdad: This is the place with the tomb of Hazrat Muhammad, the founder of Islam. This has been acknowledged the most sacred city after Mecca. This place too was under the control of Turks in those days. Preaching his gospel of truth the guru reached Baghdad in Saifavid state. Here one can see the monumental platform regarding Guru Nanak Dev's conversation with Fakir Shah Behlol. The inscription engraved on it reveals that in 927 Hijri (1520-21 AD) Guru Nanak had reached there.

3. Hassan Abdal: From Baghdad, the guru set out for his forward journey- passing through Tehran, Mash-had, Heart, Khurasan area of Kabul and Kandhar, the areas ruled by big or small tribes he crossed Khyber pass and reached Hassan Abdal. All the way he kept delivering his message to people. There lived on the hill a fakir named Vali Kandhari in Hassan Abdal. His popularity eroded with Guru Nanak's arrival. So out of jealousy he stopped the supply of water from the waterfall that flowed downwards. Realizing the water crisis of the people, guru ji removed a big stone and a fountain of water gushed forth from under it at once. It humbled the pride of Vali Kandhari. The gurdwara Panja Sahib is situated here to commemorate this marvel.

4. Sayyadpur: The guru came to know from Hassan Abdal that Babar was coming to invade India. Walking towards Punjab the guru also reached Sayyadpur- the native village of his disciple Bhai Lalo. After some days the forces of Babar started a whirlwind of killing and the remaining people were made to work as coolies to carry their booty. Guru Nanak was also one of them. Hearing about keertan in the jail Babar came and said that had he known about the divinity of Nanak he would not have

ordered the devastation of this city. The guru says:

**kal kaatee raajay kaasaa-ee Dharam pankh kar udri-aa.
koorh amaavas sach chandarmaa deesai naahee kah charhi-aa.
ha-o bhaal vikunnee ho-ee. aaDhaaraai raahu na ko-ee.
vich ha-umai kar dukh ro-ee.**

kaho naanak kin biDh gat ho-ee. ||1||

(Maajh Mehlaa 1, page 145)

And

**jaisee mai aavai khasam kee banee
taisrhaa karee gi-aan vay laalo.
paap kee janj lai kaablahu Dhaa-i-aa
joree mangai daan vay laalo.
saram Dharam du-ay chhap khalo-ay
koorh firai parDhaan vay laalo.
kaajee-aa baamnaa kee gal thakee
agad parhai saitaan vay laalo.
musalmaanee-aa parheh kataybaa kasat
meh karahi khudaa-ay vay laalo.
jaat sanaatee hor hidvaanee-aa ayhi
bhee laykhai laa-ay vay laalo.
khoon kay sohilay gavee-ah naanak
rat kaa kungoo paa-ay vay laalo. ||1||**

(tilang mehlaa 1, page 722)

Beside describing the oppression unleashed by Babar, Guru Nanak also condemned the cowardice and incapacity of the Lodhi rulers.

Looking at the haloed face of the guru, Babar not only released him but at his bidding released all other captives as well. Also, he returned the looted booty and pledged that he would not make such excesses again. After another brief stay at Sayyadpur, the guru reached Kartarour in 1522 AD. He lost his parents the same year.

Here he practiced what he had been preaching during his odysseys. He discarded the attire of a recluse and showed to the

world that man can be recluse even in his household life. He ploughed the fields, tended the cattle, served in the Langar and surfeited the devotees with the food for the spirit including his discourse and divine melody of *keertan*.

After about eight years he convinced the jogis and *siddhas* at Achal Vatala that householder's life too is a part of *sannyas*. It is not wise to condemn the householders at whose doorsteps you go for begging alms. Leading a life of love, service and devotion while living amidst your own families and simultaneously keeping attuned to God is what is real yoga.

Conclusion: Baba Nanak himself kept traversing the arduous paths throughout his paths irrespective of the whims of weather, difficult terrains, sea and showed the path of uprightness to humanity. But this track does not stop here. We the inheritors of Nanak's heritage should do good to others even at the cost of our own comfort. We should not let anybody return hungry from our doorstep even though we ourselves remain hungry. We should cultivate the art of being reclusive even in household life. This falls to our share only.

The Concept of Naam in Nanak's Philosophy: Guru Nanak Dev has laid great emphasis on the importance of Rama. The nature of this *naam* is just tonal. This is no noun or name in the traditional sense of the term. In fact, it is a cosmic music that resonates in every human heart. It is for man to enliven it in his being. In his *bani*, the guru has preached values like working hard, partaking of earnings, giving up superstition, living a simple life, eating simple food with humility in the *pangat* i.e. queue and keep the Holy naam i.e. name of God always throbbing with your heart. He never described any god or goddess or man as creator of this universe. According to him it is only God whose name has existed for ever and will keep existent till eternity. He writes:

saachaa saahib saach naa-ay bhaakhi-aa bhaa-o apaar.

aakhahi mangahi dayhi dayhi daat karay daataar.

fayr ke agai rakhee-ai jit disai darbaar.

muhou ke bolan bolee-ai jit sun Dharay pi-aar.

amrit vaylaa sach naa-o vadi-aa-ee veechaar.

karmee aavai kaprhaa nadree mokh du-aar.

naanak ayvai jaanee-ai sabh aapay sachiaar. ||4||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib, page 2)

Explanation: This universe rests on *naam* only and it is only *naam* which governs it. God Himself is true as also His name. He is life-giver. He is the Master of the entire universe. He has created everything. We cannot offer Him anything from what He has given us. We are simply beggars at his door. He is the Creator. He is the knower of all. What prayer can we make before Him? In this hymn, the guru has said that the one who get up early in the ambrosial hour, he attains to salvation by getting free from the cycle of births and rebirths.

Jit dar lakh muhammada lakh Brahme Bishan Mahesh.

Lakh lakh Ram wadeerieh lakh rahi lakh ves.

Guru Nanak Dev tells us that the court of God or Akalpurkh is full of great splendor. Numerous gods, goddesses, demons, ritualists, the masters of occult powers, yogis, renunciates, avatars and celibates are standing at His door with bowed heads. Innumerable men of elevation are engrossed in His name. This hymn of Guru Nanak sings praises to Akalpurkh. According to him no true peace of mind is possible without the preaching of the guru nobody can have a glimpse of God's Abode nor can anybody enter His court:

**pavan guroo paanee pitaa maataa Dharat mahat.
divas raat du-ay daa-ee daa-i-aa khaylai sagal jagat.
chang-aa-ee-aa buri-aa-ee-aa vaachai Dharam hadoor.
karmee aapo aapnee kay nayrhai kay door.
jinee naam Dhi-aa-i-aa ga-ay maskat ghaal.
naanak tay mukh ujlay kaytee chhutee naal. ||1||**
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib, page 8)

This last hymn of Japuji Sahib also highlights the power of *naam* and says that human body is a product of air, water and soil. As spiritual life is impossible without guru, man cannot survive with the above three elements of nature. Water is like father which nourishes the plant and earth is the mother that shelters all in her lap. Day and night the maids rock the cradle of life. Dharam Raj rewards everybody according to his deeds in life. Nanak says that those who remember the Holy name are liberated from the unending cycle of births and rebirths and reach the court of God.

THE CONCEPT OF GURMUKH AND MANMUKH IN GURU NANAK'S BANI

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Guru Nanak was born on 3 Vaisakh 1526 (Vikrami) or April 1469 AD at Rai Bhoi Ki Talwandi in District Shekhupura. Now in Pakistan, this town was later renamed as Nankana Sahib. In his book "Nanak Parkash" Bhai Santokh Singh has described this date as October 1469. The name of his father was Mehta Kalu while that of mother was Tripta. Mehta Kalu was worked as Patwari in Talwandi. As per traditional sources his life can be divided into three segments: the life at home from 1469 to 1497, a period he spent as a householder discharging various mundane responsibilities. Ever since childhood he was a precocious child with subtle intellect. At school he asked such probing questions from his teachers that had rendered the latter answerless. His writings reveal that he not only made an intensive study into various sects and philosophies but redefined some concepts from his own angle. He was married to Sulakhani, a wedlock that produced two sons viz. Siri Chand and Lachhmi Chand respectively in 1489 and 1497. Keeping himself aloof from the shackles of earthly life he remained engrossed in the Holy name.

The first part of his life passed in the emergence of some eyebrow raising incidents.

The second part ranges from 1497 to 1521. This was the period during which he conducted as many as four odysseys and weaned the people away from useless ritualism and superstitions and put them on the right track.

The third part constitutes his eighteen years long period (1521-1539) at Kartarpur. Free from his travels during this period, he not only penned down all his experiences but shared them also with the *sangat* i.e. religious congregation. That is why some scholars describe this part as *Kartarpur Sangat* part of his life. This was actually the period in which Sikhism was founded. He analyzed his ideas on the basis of his conversation sessions with the leaders of yogis, Jainism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Qazis,

sufis etc. and worked out a way of life for humanity which lay steeped neck deep in social and religious life. Most of his long journeys are supposed to have taken place in this very period.

Personality: Guru Nanak Dev had a versatile and balanced personality. He carved out a combination of the spiritual and the mundane. He refuted the idea of any antagonism between the two. He was crazy about the aesthetics of Nature. He had a glimpse of God in Nature. He has given a very vivid description of nature's beauty in the Malhar raga Var. The guru has exhibited utmost humility in his poetry by writing:

Nanak neech kahei veechar.

Ab initio, he had been very sensitive, sensible and rational in approach. Apart from this, he was very innovative, creative and iconoclastic also. He heralded a new era in the area of philosophy.

Writing: The gamut of his writing includes 207 *padas*, 121 *ashtpadis*, 24 *chhants*, 116 *pauris*, 259 *shlokas*, 1 *mantra*, 2 *pahras*, 5 *alauhnis*, 2 *kuchajji-suchajji*, 22 *sohilas*, 199 *pad* and 9 big-sized compositions. *Jaapu*, *Maajh Di Var*, *Patti*, *Asa Di Var*, *Thiti*, *Onkar*, *Sidh Gosht*, *Barahmah*, *Malhar Di Var* etc. are some of his other compositions. Out of the total 31 ragas used in the *Adi Granth*, Guru Nanak has composed his *bani* in 20 ragas. The whole of his *bani* leads man on the path of worship to God. There is frequent use of two words '*gurmukh*' and '*manmukh*' in Guru Nanak's poetry. Both the words occupy a special place in the Sikh ethos. In 17th and 18th *pauri* of *Japuji sahib*, Guru Nanak has described the categories of men as innumerable but he had divided them in two major kinds: 1. *Gurmukh* (The guru-oriented) and 2. *Manmukh* (Self-willed). As per *gurmat*, the *gurmukh* is one who treads the path shown by the guru. On the other hand, the *manmukh* is governed by his own mind and he does everything according to his will caring little for the norms of ethics or spirituality.

Guru Arjun Dev is of the view that the consciousness of man is elevated with the proximity to the guru. He engrosses himself in worship of God and thus attains to salvation.

gurmukh sabad amrit hai saar.
naanak gurmukh paavai paar. ||22||
(Raamkalee Mehlaa 1, page 932)

The major trait of gurmukh's personality is that he does not believe in the man-made barriers like religion, caste, color, race etc. He is never driven by ego and remains humble. The life of a gurmukh is always successful. He understands gurbani very keenly and makes it an integral part of his life. He does not think for his own success but puts others on the this track with motivation:

Gurmukh janam sadartha gurbani parhi samjh sune hi.
Gurbhai santusht kar charnamrit lai much pivehi.

In Maru sohilas Guru Nanak has described gurmukh as gyan also. His main symptoms liberate him from ego. Guru Nnak goes to the extent of saying that one who strikes the deal of naam is a rarity. Gurmukh acts according to his guru's desire and dissolves in him.

Sacha sau da virla ko paai.
Poora satiguru mile milaai.
Gurmukh hoi so hukam pachhane.'
Maane hukam samaaida.

On the contrary, manmukh cannot understand the shabd because of inner inertia. So he remains entangled in the cycle of births and rebirths. The gurmukh enjoys his life while a manmukh always remains sad.

gurmukh sukhee-aa manmukh dukhee-aa.
gurmukh sanmukh manmukh vaymukhee-aa.
gurmukh milee-ai manmukh vichhurai
gurmukh biDh pargataa-ay jee-o. ||7||

(Maajh Mehlaa 5, page 131)

One who follows his mind only gets enmeshed in vices and drifts away from his goal in life. According to guru, the word and deed of manmukh are not the same.

manmukh kathnee hai par rahat na ho-ee.

(Bilaaval Asatpadee-aa Mehlaa 1 Ghar 10, page 831)

On the other hand the qualities of gurmukh are countless and ineffable. Keeping engrossed in worship of God and being humble are the traits of a gurmukh personality. Gurmukh wears ear rings of contentment, makes toil his begging bowl and besmears his body with the ash of Holy Name. He keeps his body free from vices.

jiv jiv hukam tivai tiv kaar.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 8)

As regards the concept of gurmukh, the successor gurus expanded it further to the aspects of joy-sorrow, old age, friendship etc. Manmukh forfeits the very purpose of his life with his over involvement in mundane affairs. He destroys his life with avarice. Guru Amar Das has presented gurmukh as one who is fully conscious about life and death.

Besides, the subjects like bhagti (devotion), mehar (Grace), mukti (salvation) etc. have been associated with gurmukh's inquisition. The definition of gurmukh is very vast.

To sum up we can say that as per Guru Nanak Dev's bani, gurmukh is the one who submits to the will of the guru and accepts the will of God as inevitable. He believes in the shabd of the guru by freeing himself from the bondage of rituals. That is why gurmukh is eulogized as suhagin (the woman with the living husband) while manmukh invites upon himself the invectives like veshya (prostitute), bagla (herring), ungrateful, bishta ka keera (the shit worm) He finds it difficult to free himself from the vices and thus keeps running towards them. But the grace of God always keeps raining on him.

GURU NANAK'S TEACHINGS VS. MESSAGE OF BROTHERHOOD

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The importance of a day is linked to certain incidents that took place on that particular day. Here we are going to talk about the day on which Guru Nanak Dev was born. It is no use wasting time on sakhis (parables) we have been told since our childhood. Almost all of these are concocted stories. So we shall talk about something which could come under the title 'Nanak sair ev kahatu hai'.

Bhai Gurdas wrote on Baba Nanak's birth:

***Satigur Nanak pargat hoya, miti dhund jag chanan hoa.
Jeon kar sooraj niklya tare chhpe haner paloa.***

The fog, we know, cripples the visibility of man. It becomes so impenetrable that nothing but the sun is potent enough to dispel it. So, at a time when the people in general were caught in the fog of superstition, idol worship, worthless rites and rituals Nanak appeared on the scene to dispel the fog of ignorance through his gospel.

Now in the prevailing situation, the functions to disseminate his teachings are being organized with great religious fervor everywhere in the world. Clarion calls are being given to steer people on the track of humanism by breaking them away from evil. This has never been an easy task. And how can it be? Delivering lectures in the functions or just theories are not going to do any good at all. Reading anything for that matter, without understanding it is just meaningless. So the need of the day is to grasp the inlaid message of the guru's teachings as it is only the deeds which have to become the basis of judgment at last.

The modern age is very different from the times of the guru. The society at that time was reeling under abject poverty. The Hindu priesthood had landed the common man in the mire of useless rituals, idolatry and a set of superstitions in the name of

religion. Like today the society was cleft in two parts: Haves and Have-nots. Under the stress of poverty so many people preferred to take refuge in jungles or mountains under the garb of meditation. But for survival they also depended on the household world which they claimed to have abandoned. Thus both the powerful and the idlers as mentioned above, survived on the sweat of common man's brow. It was in this scenario that Guru Nanak preached working hard and partaking with the needy. He provided a sheen of dignity to manual work saying:

Ghaali khai kichhu jathon dei, Nanak raahu pachhanahi sei.

Or,

Hakk paraya Nanaka us suar us gaai

History stands witness to the fact that Guru Nanak approached such mendicants, siddhas, yogis etc. dwelling in their own world away from the world of common man. He apprised them with the condition of common man and urged them to come back to the world of reality. And, these were no ordinary people. They were intellectuals of their age which becomes evident from their dialogue with the guru. The tradition of seminars and symposia that we find in the colleges and universities definitely owes its origin to these goshts of the Master. Gosht is the occasion to say your point of view and hear the other's. That is why Guru Nanak says:

***jab lag dunee-aa rahee-ai naanak
kichh sunee-ai kichh kahee-ai.***

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 661)

The guru visited Lanka, Tibet and Arab countries also. He met the pundits, mullahs and other religious leaders and enlightened them on what exactly is the essence of religion. Among spiritual leaders, Guru Nanak was perhaps the most traveled man. He propagated his message everywhere he went. In 1480, the priest was called to initiate him through yagyopveet ceremony but he asked him a very thought provoking question and ruled out the utility of the so-called sacred thread. His poetic journey thus starts in his very childhood and grows with the passage of time.

Yagyopveet was a very common tradition at that time for initiating the child into Hinduism. The legend goes that Nanak demanded from the priest called for this purpose a peculiar kind of sacred thread which should ensure for the wearer the qualities like compassion, contentment, continence and patience. It has been widely publicized that he had said to the pundit:

da-i-aa kapaah santokh soot jat gandhee sat vat.

ayhu janay-oo jee-a kaa ha-ee ta paaday ghat.

(Salok Mehlaa 1, page 471)

Thus demanding the imperishable janeu from the priest, Guru Nanak in a way, ruled out the need of the conventional thread. No details are available from any sources whatsoever, as to what was the reaction of the guru's parents or society in general at this rebellion of the 11 year-old boy? We are prone to believe the sakhis without applying our mind. Just imagine what would have been the state of affairs today if Nanak had accepted wearing the sacred thread at that time? By resisting a mindless tradition, Guru Nanak opened the gateway to reason thus brushing aside the convention.

We must remember that prior to Nanak, Kabir also had trodden this path of revolt. Almost all the saint poets of the *Bhagti* Movement condemned the superstition and timed out age old traditions. It is believed that the peak of Bhagti Movement resulted in the emergence of Sikhism. We should make the wisdom of gurus and saint poets a part of our thinking and resolve not to believe anything with blindfolded eyes. It was this point of convergence which made the *bhagat* poets' writings a part of *Adi Granth*. The path of Nanak is the path of reasoning. It is very easy to walk on the beaten track. Moving on the untrodden path is difficult but carving out an altogether new path is all the more difficult.

Guru Nanak Dev also condemned the Brahmin society for looking down on woman and raised his voice in her favor saying:

bhand jammee-ai bhand nimmee-ai bhand mangan vee-aahu.

bhandahu hovai dostee bhandahu chalai raahu.

bhand mu-aa bhand bhaalee-ai bhand hovai banDhaan.

so ki-o mandaa aakhee-ai jit jameh raajaan.

(Salok Mehlaa 1, page 473)

Let us look around and make introspection today whether we have adopted even an ounce of Nanak's wisdom in our life. In reality, we have focused our entire attention to project ourselves as bigger followers of Nanak than others. This too forfeits the very purpose of Guru Nanak's mission as he was deadly against ostentation and wanted to pull man out of this slush. Thinking about the teachings of Guru Nanak we should be aware whether we have been able to rise above the discrimination against man by man on the basis of birth or caste. Let us measure our performance in the world with the yardstick of Guru Nanak and try to improve upon ourselves if found wanting.

Today, our social relations have become very messy. Disputed between *nanad* (husband's sister) and *bhabhi* (brother's wife) as also between *sass* (the spouse's mother) and *nuh* (daughter-in-law) are very common. During such disputes why do we forget Bibi Nanaki and Mata Sulakhani who, though *nanad* and *bhabhi* to each other lived together as sisters. Similarly, Mata Sulakhani and Tripta also lived together as mother and daughter. This peaceful coexistence in Nanak's family should become an ideal for us. While committing excesses on daughters-in-law aren't we discarding the values of Guru Nanak?

The votaries of Guru Nanak always stand by truth. But our religious and social leaders today have gone so far from the path shown by the guru that it would not be an exaggeration to call them impostors. Out of their vested interests they have not allowed the social divide based on caste and creed to crumble. They rather cash in upon this weakness of man. They have even gone to the extent of building *gurdwaras* based on caste. And, ironically they call themselves the followers of Nanak.

With the spread of Nanak's message the darkness of ignorance was gradually dispelled. The guru highlighted the dignity of labor by refusing the sumptuous meal of Malik Bhago and accepting the humble hospitality of Bhai Lalo. He honored both the manual work and the workers. By exposing Malik Bhago's ill-begotten wealth he stressed upon the importance of

honest means of livelihood.

Today, the idlers masquerading as god men are amassing fabulous wealth and building their commercial empires and preaching others to work hard in obedience to Nanak's preaching. Guru Nanak described *naam* as the panacea of all ills while these thugs make it look like a commodity to be produced and sold by them only as franchisees of God. The need of the day is to recognize the devil behind the veil of angel.

As regards brotherhood, the bonding between Nanak and Mardana exemplifies it in the best way. The guru treated him at par and loved him like a brother. Mardana too came true to the obligations of a brother throughout his life. Both together set out on world tour to disseminate the message of truth far and wide. Wherever they went they tried to initiate a dialogue to bring home the message. These travels are known as odysseys. Bhai Gurdas writes about these journeys:

Babey bhekh banaya udasi ki reet chalaiee
Charhya sodhan dharti lokaiee.

Here is a brief account of these udasis excerpted with thanks from Gurmat Parkash:

First Odyssey known as Eastern Odyssey

According to Prof. Sahib Singh the first odyssey spreads over eight years- 1507 to 1515. He traveled 6000 to 7000 miles during this journey and covered places like the Hindu pilgrimages viz. Hardwar, Gorakhmata, Ayudhya, Banaras, Gaya, Jagannathpuri, Madurai, Rameshwaram, Somnath, Dwarka, Pushkar, Mathura, Vrindavan and Kurukshetra. In addition to these he journeyed to Simhal Dweep, Sikkim, Assam, Bengal, Orissa, Dravid Desh, Bombay, Aurangabad, Ujjain, Kachh, Ajmer etc. It was during this odyssey that he shaped his spiritual experiences into a systematic philosophy and decided to set up a center for its propagation. Following this odyssey he settled a new village Gurdaspur near the River Ravi in District Gurdaspur. When a small inn was built there his parents also came to live with him along with Mardana's family. The guru remained

engaged in settling Kartarpur but soon thereafter he set out for the next journey.

This is worth mention here that Guru Nanak saw the devotees performing the ritual of Arti and then he composed the most beautiful cosmic Arti as under:

**gagan mai thaal rav chand deepak banay
taarika mandal janak motee.**

**Dhoop mal-aanlo pavan chavro karay
sagal banraa-ay foolant jotee. ||1||**

kaisee aartee ho-ay.

bhav khandnaa tayree aartee.

(Raag Dhanaasree Mehlaa 1, page 13)

Second Odyssey Eastwards

The second odyssey was of two three years only. During this odyssey the guru traveled to Jammu and Kashmir. First, he toured to Vaishno Devi via Gyan Kot and Jammu. Then he went to Amarnath in Matan and thenceforward to the snow-clad Kailash mountain range where he had a dialogue with the siddhas. Bhai Gurdas says:

Phir jaai charhya Sumer pari sidh mandli drishti aaiee.

Sabd jit sidh mandli. (Var 1:31)

Third Odyssey- Westwards

The third odyssey ranges from 1518 to 1521 AD. The guru set out from Kartarpur towards west (Central Asia). As per Bhai Gurdas:

Baba phir make gaya neel bastar dhaarey banwari.

(Var 1, Paudi 33)

When Guru Nanak went to Mecca he was asked by the Ulemas: Who is bigger- Hindu or Mussalman? The guru said it was not the question of Hindu or Muslim but that of the deeds in human garb.

According to Bhai Gurdas:

Puchhan phol kitab no hindu vadda ki muslmaanoi.

Baba aakhey hkjia subh amlan bajhahu dono roi.

(Var 1, Paudi 33)

This time he reached Makran area via Kasur, Tulamba, Multan, Bahawalpur and Shakhar etc. Then he went to Mecca where he had a dialogue with the Hajis including Rukandeen. Then he visited Medina, Basra, Karbala and Baghdad.

The pictures relating to this journey show him wearing a cord cap. It looks quite natural as only Muslims were allowed to visit Mecca and Medina. Writing about this odyssey Bhai Gurdas says: Phiri baba aaya Baghdad no bahar jaai kiya asthana.

Ik baba Akalroop dooja rababi Mardana.

There is no mention of Bala here.

(Var 1:35)

In a city where raga was considered a sin he did keertan and flouted the popular belief that there seven earths with the assertion "Paataala paataal and Lakh aagasa aagas". Then from Baghdad he reached Hassan Abdal near Rawalpindi via Isfran, Tehran, Mastakk Bukhara, Samarkand, Kabul through Jalalabad. Then he left Emnabad for Kartarpur. Guru Nanak is believed to have made an intensive study into Muslim beliefs, customs and scripture. Emnabad came under Baba's attack which he described as under:

khuraasaan khasmaanaa kee-aa hindusataan daraa-i-aa.

aapai dos na day-ee kartaa jam kar mugal charhaa-i-aa.

aytee maar pa-ee karlaanay taiN kee darad na aa-i-aa. ||1||

(Aasaa Mehlaa 1, page 360)

And

kal kaatee raajay kaasaa-ee Dharam pankh kar udri-aa.

(Salok Mehlaa 1, page 145)

The Brahmins and mullas claimed to be the minions of God and acted as His mediaries to make the common man meet

Him during those days. The guru chastised them saying:

koorh bol murdaar khaa-ay.

avree no samjhaavan jaa-ay.

(Salok Mehlā 1, page 139)

And, there were impostors who claimed to be very scholarly but preferred begging to doing any work. Nanak lambasted them in choicest strong words saying:

gi-aan vihoonaa gaavai geet.

bhukhay mulaaN gharay maseet.

makhtoo ho-ay kai kann parhaa-ay.

fakar karay hor jaat gavaa-ay.

gur peer sadaa-ay mangan jaa-ay.

(Salok Mehlā 1, page 1245)

But the hordes of so-called saints of today travel by air to the foreign lands and come back laden with wealth. They exploit our blind faith in them and loot our gold by handing us a pouch of ash. We must remain wary of such swindlers and do away with the darkness of ignorance shrouding our minds. Now the things have come to such a pass as if we don't have any heads on our shoulders:

anDhaa aagoo jay thee-ai ki-o paaDhar jaanai.

aap musai mat hochhee-ai ki-o raahu pachhaanai.

(Soohee Mehlā 1, page 767)

Gurbani also says:

mandaa kisai na aakhee-ai parh akhar ayho bujhee-ai.

moorkhai naal na lujhee-ai. ||19||

(Mehlā 1, page 473)

Most of the followers of Baba Nanak today pay obeisance at the thresholds of parasites. Nanak honored Bhai Lalo, the honest bread-earner and pooh-poohed Malik Bhagos. But the descendents of Lalo are being oppressed today while the Bhagos have established control over religion and religious institutions. Nanak's faith believes in a truthful life and partnership. But don't we see the Sajjan thugs leading our society today? Why don't we

act upon Nanak's call for uniting the divided hearts? Or, the question is, when shall we?

All of us listen to the discourses of Guru Nanak about the curse of caste-based discrimination but we never make single endeavor to efface it from the society. But it has to start from self only. For this purpose, we shall have to flush out all the dirt poled in our bodies down the ages. We live under the fallacy of being bigger than others but see what Nanak says in this regard:

neechaa andar neech jaat neechee hoo at neech.

naanak tin kai sang saath vadi-aa si-o ki-aa rees.

(Sireeraag Mehlaa 1, page 15)

This message should make us aware at least as to whom is Nanak favoring. Baba Nanak said, he said it dauntlessly. He used the hardest possible words ever used earlier by anyone for parasites whether they were in religious garb or in the ruling elite. The poor worker was subjected to exploitation while the ruling class lived a luxurious life at their expense. He made the whole picture clear in a single line only:

Raje sheehn mukaddam kutte

The situation is the same even today but the commentators are there. He lived at Kartarpur for about eighteen years where he remained engaged in worship. Describing Kartarpur dharmshala, Bhai Gurdas says:

Gian gosht charcha sada anhad sabd uthei dhanukara.

It was here that Bhai Lehna ji came to see him. From then onwards Lehna ji became his pucca disciple. It was the same Lehna who later became the successor of Guru Nanak on 7 November, 1539.

In the wake of partition Kartarpur from where the message of universal brotherhood and socialism of its own kind reverberated throughout the world was left in Pakistan. Ever since, demand was being raised at regular intervals by the Indian Sikhs to open a corridor between Dera Baba Nanak and Kartarpur. The demand has been accepted now after more than seven decades. This is a welcome step which portends opening of

new vistas of cordiality between the neighbors. The message of Guru Nanak is gateway of universal love and fraternity. So let us try to imbibe the teachings of the guru and avoid all that is evil in life. Baba Farid, the first poet of Punjabi says:

**fareedaa jay jaanaa til thorh-rhay sammal buk bharee.
jay jaanaa saho nandh-rhaa taaN thorhaa maan karee. ||4||**
(Salok Saykh Fareed kay, page 1378)

Today, a number of swindlers call themselves saints just on the basis of their apparel only. Following such people only cripples the humanist thought in general. "No men are foreign"-should be the watchword of the guru's followers in general:

Sabhei saanjhiwal sadayan koi na dise bahra jeeo

Anyway, there is nothing to worry about. To make our life relevant we must act upon the dictum:

Sache marg chaldian ustat kare jahan

GURU NANAK - THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

(With special reference to As Di Var)

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Guru Nanak Dev was a man of versatile personality. Among various other aspects of talent, he was a great poet also. To judge his contribution towards humanity as a poet we must have an understanding of the contemporary society of his times. The people in those days were mostly illiterate and caught in the mesh of superstitions. They faced the hardship of their life as retribution of fate against some of their misdeeds in the earlier lives. This research paper is an attempt to have a glimpse into the guru's contemporary society with special reference to Asa di Var. Having 24 pauris and 45 shlokas of Guru Nanak Dev Asa Di Var keertan is done in ambrosial hour everyday. It has been instructed to be sung on Tunde Asraje di dhun. (tune made by Tunda Asraj). Rest of the shlokas belong to Gur Angad Dev. The number of shlokas is not the same in all the pauris. (Dr. Vidyawati: 2005; 48. The hero of this var is gursikh.

Dictionary Meaning:

1. Asa Di Var is a very important composition of Guru Nanak. It is keertaned in religious congregations, diwans and all other festive occasions. (Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi: 2000;81)
2. Asa Di Var has some shlokas from Guru Angad Dev also. The tradition of singing in society is very old. (Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha)
3. **Asavri:** A ragini of sampooran jati which has been enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib by mixing it with 'Asa' ragini. The time has been prescribed as before sunrise. (Dr. Harcharan Singh)
4. Prior to Guru Nanak Asa Di Var was a folk-var only. Contrary to the var tradition of the earlier period, this var describes the conflict of man not in the battlefield but in his life at large. (Dr. Vidyawati)

Language: Guru Nanak Dev has used very simple and lucid and easily understandable folk- language in Asa Di Var. The chaste form of Punjabi has also been used in it along with its dialects. Here and there we find the use of Braj, Arabic and Persian words also in their original form. (Surinder Singh Kohli: 2000; 206)

To have a glimpse into the contemporary society in the guru's times we shall have to take a look on the social traditions, folk life and political climate of those days.

Political Aspect: The ruling elite lived a life of utmost luxury while the common people just wallowed in appalling poverty. The rulers imposed exorbitant taxes on people. If we shuffle back the pages of history we find that the Muslim rulers unleashed inhuman oppression on Hindus. But if we study Guru Nanak's times in the context of contemporary Punjab we shall find that they were subjected to persecution from political, not religious perspective. (Dr. Surinder Singh Dosanjh: 2011; 25)

It seemed as if the people had lost all sense of self-respect and dignity. The guru describes this scenario as under:

lab paap du-ay raajaa mahtaa koorh ho-aa sikdaar.
kaam nayb sad puchhee-ai bahi bahi karay beechaar.
anDhee rayat gi-aan vihoonee bhaahi bharay murdaar.
(Mehlaa 1, page 468)

Describing the bad political condition the guru says that education without imparting *naam* is useless. These rulers are sucking the blood of their subjects through their officers.

raajay seeh mukdam kutay.
jaa-ay jagaa-iniH baithay sutay.
chaakar nahdaa paa-iniH ghaa-o.
rat pit kutiho chat jaahu.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1288)

Describing this state of affairs, the guru says the rulers had become tyrants. In such times people could not see truth anywhere. That is why he says:

**kal kaatee raajay kaasaa-ee Dharam pankh kar udri-aa.
koorh amaavas sach chandarmaa deesai naahee kah charhi-aa.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 145)**

In such circumstances nobody dared say a word against injustice but the guru raised his voice very dauntlessly. The qazis were addicted to bribes and falsehood reigned supreme everywhere. The guru says:

**maanas khaanay karahi nivaaj.
chhuree vagaa-in tin gal taag.
tin ghar barahman pooreh naad.
unHaa bhe aavahi o-ee saad.
koorhee raas koorhaa vaapaar.
koorh bol karahi aahaar.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 471)

Brahmanic Attire: Guru Nanak Dev ji has condemned the hypocrisy and superstitions of Brahmanic praxis at several places. Since the Brahmin was revered as a spiritual leader in those days, he took full advantage of the situation and entangled the gullible masses in the mesh of rites and rituals. The guru says that there is no use sitting in meditation like a heron if your mind is not free of greed or falsehood. Castigating the brahmanical hypocrisy Guru Nanak says:

**parh pustak sanDhi-aa baadaN.
sil poojas bagul samaaDhaN.
mukh jhooth bibhookhan saaraN.
taraipaal tihaal bichaaraN.
gal maalaa tilak lilaataN.
du-ay Dhotee bastar kapaataN.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 470)

The guru says that just wearing white clothes won't do any good if your mind is full of anger. Those who, oblivious of God, are steeped in illusory world affairs can never attain spiritual bliss.

**Dhotee oojal tilak gal maalaa.
 antar kroDh parheh naat saalaa.
 naam visaar maa-i-aa mad pee-aa.
 bin gur bhagat naahee sukh thee-aa. ||4||**
 (Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 832)

Condemning the useless rituals, the guru says that these pundits have kept themselves away from such a sacred thread as may stop them from going on the path of evil. The guru urged them to discard the ordinary sacred thread and adopt the janeu of ethical values.

**tag na indree tag na naaree.
 bhalkay thuk pavai nit daarhee.
 tag na pairee tag na hathee.
 tag na jihvaa tag na akhee.**
 (Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 471)

Nanak says that on one hand floor is sanctified by coating it with cowdung but on the other both cow and Brahmin are taxed. Outwardly, there is a show off of tikka on the forehead and a rosary in the hands but secretly, they eat from Muslim homes.

**ga-oo biraahman ka-o kar laavhu gobar taran na jaa-ee.
 Dhotee tikaa tai japmaalee Dhaan malaychhaaN khaa-ee.
 antar poojaa parheh kataybaa sanjam turkaa bhaa-ee.**
 (Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 471)

The Condition of Woman: The condition of woman was quite pitiable in the times of Guru Nanak Dev. She was treated as a slave in the contemporary male chauvinist society. Her presence was considered ominous in religious functions. "She was denounced in their poetry by poets like Kabir as also in the writing Naths and Siddhas. Likening her to cattle, mosquito, housefly etc. oppression on her was justified. (Surinder Singh Kohli: 2000;204) It was only Guru Nanak Dev who raised his voice in favour of woman by saying:

bhand jammee-ai bhand nimmee-ai bhand mangan vee-aahu,
 bhandahu hovai dostee bhandahu chalai raahu.
 bhand mu-aa bhand bhaalee-ai bhand hovai banDhaan.
 so ki-o mandaa aakhee-ai jit jameh raajaan.
 (Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 473)

The Dominance of Caste Differences: The contemporary society was pagued awfully by the scourge of casteism. The society was clearly divided into varnas. The low caste people were disparaged in a very inhuman way. Their presence was not tolerated in common places. Rituals were performed for purgation if someone from this segment touched some other belonging to higher caste. The low castes were deprived of even their human rights. "They were called untouchables or shudras. (Surinder Singh Kohli;2000; 205)

The guru told the conceited 'high caste' people that in the court of God no weightage will be given to the position in caste hierarchy. There only man's deeds in this life will be evaluated.

agai jaat na jor hai agai jee-o navay.
 jin kee laykhai pat pavai changay say-ee kay-ay. ||3||
 (Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 469)

Guru Amar Das also appeals to man that he should not feel proud of his caste of birth as it leads to further so many vices. He says:

jaat kaa garab na karee-ahu ko-ee.
 barahm binday so baraahman ho-ee. ||1||
 jaat kaa garab na kar moorakh gavaaraa.
 is garab tay chaleh bahut vikaaraa. ||1|| rahaa-o.
 (Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1127)

Similarly, Bhagat Kabir also condemns casteism when he asks the Brahman whether he had milk in his body and not blood like in the body of a shudra.

jou tooN baraahman barahmanee jaa-i-aa.
 ta-o aan baat kaahay nahee aa-i-aa. ||2||
 tum kat baraahman ham kat sood.

ham kat lohoo tum kat dooDh. ||3||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 324)

Ritualism: Raising his voice against social evils, the guru stressed upon the purity of mind. He criticized the misplaced value-system prevailing in both the Hindus and Muslims. He underlined the futility of going to pilgrimages if mind is not cleansed first. He writes:

andrahu jhoothay paij baahar dunee-aa andar fail.

athsath tirath jay naaveh utrai naahee mail.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 473)

Bhagat Kabir also chastises the hypocrites who talk of virtue or charity like an enlightened being but their mind is inhabited with nothing but deceit, dishonesty and falsehood only.

hirdai kapat mukh gi-aanee.

jhoothay kahaa bilovas paanee. ||1||

kaaN-i-aa maaNjas ka-un gunaaN.

ja-o ghat bheetar hai malnaaN. ||1|| rahaa-o.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 656)

The guru tells us with great finesse that performance of rituals or practices like going to pilgrimages, observance of silence, renunciation of home and hearth, walking barefoot or unclad- is just an exercise in futility. It does not help us in communion with God. He says:

ann na khaa-i-aa saad gavaa-i-aa.

baho dukh paa-i-aa doojaa bhaa-i-aa.

bastar na pahirai. ahinis kahrai.

mon vigootaa. ki-o jaagai gur bin sootaa.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 467)

Religious Downfall: During those days religious degeneration was at its climax. Those who called themselves leaders of people or say opinion leaders had become arrogant under the pride of their knowledge. The guru says:

parh parh gadee ladee-ah parh parh bharee-ah saath.
parh parh bayrhee paa-ee-ai parh parh gadee-ah khaat.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 467)

The guru says that without the praise of God man is lost in the wilderness of his ego. The religious degenerations had reached such a dismal extent that to fulfil their ambitions the people were ready to adopt the faith of the ruling elite. "This change of religion was not under duress or distress but due to economic constraints or the popularity of Sufism and imperialist policy of Hinduism." (Dr. Surinder Singh Kohli: 2011;26)

Conclusion: On the basis of above discussion we can say that a number of social evils like hypocritical practices in the name of religions, superstitions etc. were eating into the vitals of the very fabric of society. In 'Asa Di Var' Guru Nanak Dev has viewed the degeneration of contemporary social life from all angles. Therefore, this is the most revolutionary and reformatory among the guru's writings. At that time people had drifted much afar from their actual purpose of coming in human garb to the world i.e. remembering the name of God and religion was just a facade for them. So Guru Nanak raised his voice forcefully against political disorder, brahmanical hypocrisy, deplorable condition of woman and degradation of religion. He underlined the futility of all external ritualism and emphasized that only the worship of God with pure heart can lead to salvation.

GURU NANAK BANI- ITS RELEVANCE IN 21st. CENTURY

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When Guru Nanak was born in 1469, not only East but West too was groping in darkness of ignorance. The precept of Sun revolving around the Earth had gained firm acceptance in the west. It was only Guru Nanak that there were countless earths, suns and stars in the universe. Saying this he came out with such insights to which even the West was alien so far. In a society ridden by malaises like discrimination on the basis of caste, creed or race, the guru gave his perspective of universal brotherhood. Moreover, he gave the best model of environmental protection and development by writing:

pavan guroo paanee pitaa maataa Dharat mahat.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 8)

He also stressed upon living a life of self-respect by raising his voice against the state expression. Through his bani he stressed the need to recognize the glory of our own language and culture. He protected several folk forms of Punjab from getting lost in the mist of oblivion by using them for using them in his compositions. He formed a basis for elevating Punjabi script and language to dizzying heights by making it a vehicle of writing his spiritual poetry in it. He gave a humanistic, pluralist and progressive direction to Punjabi literature. It would be pertinent on the threshold of 21st. century to discuss these important dimensions of Nanak's poetry with a little more detail.

To my mind, originality is the benchmark of Guru Nanak's poetry. It becomes evident from his rejection of conventional pattern of education. He builds his discourse on the basis of his faculty of sharp insight and analysis e.g.

- ***Vidya veechari taan par upkari***
- ***Paapan bajh hovei nahi muia saath na jaaiee.***
- ***Sach sabhna hoi daru paap kadhei dhoi***
- ***Mithat neevin Nanaka gun chagiaian tat***
- ***Chor ki hama bharey na ko***

- ***Hakparaya Nanaka us suar us gaai***

He had the guts to say truth even in the most hostile situations. Anybody can try to be a hero by talking big after the situation at hand cools down but Guru Nanak showed guts by calling a spade a spade at the right time. This model of unstrained truth reflects from the following:

sach kee banee naanak aakhai
sach sunaa-isee sach kee baylaa. ||2||3||5||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 723)

Only a Nanak could have the mettle to say as hard words as "*Raje sheehn mukaddam kutte*" to the oppressive tyrant of the time. Only he could tell the Lodhi rulers: "Ye dogs! You have ruined the gem on earth called Hindustan:

Ratan vigaad vigoi kutti moian saar na kai.

Guru Nanak's model of patriotism had no room for hypocrisy. He denounces the acceptance of the rulers' language to be in their good book, sycophancy and tendency to condemn oppression in private but running away from a khatri's duty to face the situation openly:

khataree-aa ta Dharam chhodi-aa
malaychh bhaakhi-aa gahee.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 663)

It would be worthwhile to mention here that Guru Nanak was neither against Muslims nor against their language viz. Persian. He has made a very liberal use of Persian words in his bani. He simply exposed the hypocrisy thriving in the name of religion and language:

antar poojaa parheh kataybaa sanjam turkaa bhaa-ee.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 471)

What kind of hypocrites you are who perform Hindu worship at home secretly while in public you profess your faith in Islamic scripture and dress in blue robes like the Muslims. On the other hand you don't allow Muslims even near your kitchen. You

are even ready to eat the meat of goat after reading Kalma:

cha-ukay upar kisai na jaanaa.

day kai cha-ukaa kadhee kaar.

upar aa-ay baithay koorhi-aar.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 472)

ghar ghar mee-aa sabhnaaN jee-aaN bolee avar tumaaree. ||6||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1191)

Given the rampant hypocrisy in modern society today, the guru's preachings are all the more relevant today. They expose those who tend to be public servants but in connivance of the powers that be they turn out to be anti-people. So Guru Nanak's bani is a clarion call to the men of substance to rise tooth and nail against such anti-people forces.

The concept of woman's emancipation emerged on the scene in the west only in the twentieth century but Guru Nanak singularly raised his voice in her favour in his times. He scolded the male chauvinists asking how they could condemn woman to whom the family and society owed their existence.

Racial differences today have become a cause for intolerance and hatred which gives way to wars at international level. Here Guru Nanak's concept of universal brotherhood becomes very relevant:

sabh meh jot jot hai so-ay.

tis kai chaanan sabh meh chaanan ho-ay.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 663)

In criticizing whatever the guru felt wrong, he did not spare anybody- Hindu, Muslim, yogi etc.

kaadee koorh bol mal khaa-ay.

baraahman naavai jee-aa ghaa-ay.

jogee jugat na jaanai anDh.

teenay ojaarahay kaa banDh. ||2||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 662)

External practices in the name of religion are quite common today as they were in the times of Guru Nanak. The

devotees are unable to capture the actual spirit of religion. The following lines of Guru Nanak present a perfect model of religion in the twenty first century:

**pat vin poojaa sat vin sanjam jat vin kaahay janay-oo.
naavhu Dhovahu tilak charhaavahu such vin soch na ho-ee.||6||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 903)**

**munda santokh saram pat jholee
Dhi-aan kee karahi bibhoot.
khintha kaal ku-aaree kaa-i-aa
jugat danda parteeet.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 6)

Today we have developed a penchant for building castles in the air. There is a big chasm between what we say and do. Guru Nanak's bani makes us aware of this responsibility:

**galeeN asee changee-aa aachaaree buree-aah.
manhu kusuDhaa kaalee-aa baahar chitvee-aah.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 85)

The seeds of plularlist culture evolved by modernism lie in Guru Nanak's bani:

**sooraj ayko rut anayk.
naanak kartay kay kaytay vays. ||2||2||**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 12-13)

In the pluralist model of Guru Nanak's bani the words like bhai, sant, saadh have been used for addressing the other while for himself the guru has used words like neech (mean), papi, gunahgar etc. have been used. An underlying message in the following is that of rejecting caste outrightly:

**Neecha andar neech jaat neechi hu ati neech
Nanak tin ke sang saath vaddian seo kya rees.**

(Adi Granth, 15)

**tayree moorat aykaa bahut roop.
kis pooj charhaava-o day-o Dhoop.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1168)

The talk of relevance of Guru Nanak's bani in 21st. century will remain incomplete without the context of its scientific perspective. In ecstatic mood Nanak would make very soulful commentaries on Nature and its variegated expanse all around. His comments transport us to the world of Big Bang theory, Hubble's theory regarding infinite expanse of the Universe, Hawking's concepts and modern Big Crunch theory. Nanak does not only enjoy the wonders of Nature, he describes them in such an exquisite manner as may make his readers also share his experience:

vismaad naad vismaad vayd.
 vismaad jee-a vismaad bhayd.
 vismaad roop vismaad rang.
 vismaad naagay fireh jant.
 vismaad pa-un vismaad paanee.
 vismaad agnee khaydeh vidaanee.
 vismaad Dhartee vismaad khaanee.
 vismaad saad lageh paraanee.
 vismaad sanjog vismaad vijog.
 vismaad bhukh vismaad bhog.
 vismaad sifat vismaad saalaah.
 vismaad ujharh vismaad raah.
 vismaad nayrhai vismaad door.
 vismaad daykhai haajraa hajoor.
 vaykh vidaan rahi-aa vismaad.
 naanak bujhan poorai bhaag. ||1||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 463)

From out of this ecstatic mood he presents the panoramic spectacle of Nature, the Creator, His infinite dimensions before us. It is a description of millions of earths, innumerable suns and countless moons. Guru Nanak bani presents the Universe and Nature in different hues and shades time and again:

paataalaa paataal lakh aagaasaa aagaas.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 5)

And

ant na jaapai keetaa aakaar. ant na jaapai paaraavaar.

ant kaaran kaytay billaahi. taa kay ant na paa-ay jaahi.
ayhu ant na jaanai ko-ay. bahutaa kahee-ai bahutaa ho-ay.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 5)

kaytay pavan paanee vaisantar kaytay kaan mahays.
kaytay barmay ghaarhat gharhee-ahi roop rang kay vays.
kaytee-aa karam bhoomee mayr kaytay kaytay Dhoo updays.
kaytay ind chand soor kaytay kaytay mandal days.
kaytay siDh buDh naath kaytay kaytay dayvee vays.
kaytay dayv daanav mun kaytay kaytay ratan samund.
kaytee-aa khaanee kaytee-aa banee kaytay paat narind.
kaytee-aa surtee sayvak kaytay naanak ant na ant. ||35||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 7)

Modern science also admits that there are innumerable expanses of the Universe beyond the farthest point up to which our naked eye can see because different kinds of waves are being received by us from there also. Guru Nanak rules out the eternity of time when he says "*Adi sach jugaadi sach.*" *Adi sach* means the point of time's birth while *jugaadi sach* means when man became aware of it.

In 1930, George La Maitre had given the Big Bang theory. Parallel to it the words of Gur Nanak are mind boggling:

keetaa pasaa-o ayko kavaa-o.
tis tay ho-ay lakh daree-aa-o.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 3)

What is the gushing forth of rivers of life from a 'kawao' if not Big Bang? There is no unanimity over the origin of the universe among the scientists. Guru Nanak hints at this incertitude as under:

kavan so vaylaa vakhat kavan kavan thit kavan vaar.
kavan se rutee maahu kavan jit ho-aa aakaar.
vayl na paa-ee-aa pandtee je hovai laykh puraana.
vakhat na paa-i-o kaadee-aa je likhan laykh kuraan.
thit vaar naa jogee jaanai rut maahu naa ko-ee.
jaa kartaa sirthee ka-o saajay aapay jaanai so-ee.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 4)

Guru Nanak describes the creation as having sprung out of vacuum that existed prior to that. He takes us to the point where the analyses of Quantum Theory and other theories of Penrose and Stephen Hawking take us:

arbaḍ narbaḍ DhunDhookaaraa.

Dharan na gagnaā hukam apaaraa.

naa din rain na chand na sooraj sunn samaaDh lagaa-idaa.||1||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1035)

And

saachay tay pavnaa bha-i-aa pavnai tay jal ho-ay.

jal tay taribhavan saaji-aa ghat ghat jot samo-ay.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 19)

In nutshell, we can conclude that Guru Nanak's bani does not see the spiritual in isolation from the mundane. Each and every dimension of gurbani be it moral, religious, social, political, cultural or scientific – every aspect is full of insight and thus a guide.

THE SPECTACLE OF NATURE IN GURU GRANTH SAHIB

**Dr. Kulwant Kaur
Patialvi Panjabi Sath, Patiala**

Guru Granth Sahib is an unfathomable ocean having the feel of history of medieval India, mythology, culture, literature. Languages, religions, faiths, varna system, Punjabi ethos and specially spiritualism. But in spite of this the description of the varied moods of Nature in this description is unparalleled and worth mention.

The word 'nature' has multi-dimensional meaning which includes in its gamut the power and divinity of the Creator. Guru Nanak says:

**sachee tayree sifat sachee saalaah.
sachee tayree kudrat sachay paatisaah.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 463)

It would be relevant here to discuss in a little more detail the universal character of nature. As per the norms of linguistics some words expand while some others contract in meaning over the period of time. Similarly, the word 'qudrat' which is taken to mean only the aesthetic beauty of natural scenery, vegetation, spring season etc. had everything that pertains to the universe at one time.

kudrat disai kudrat sunee-ai kudrat bha-o sukh saar.

kudrat paataalee aakaasee kudrat sarab aakaar.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 464)

Through this couplet the guru has tried his best to vivify nature in a very picturesque manner. The comprehensive portrayal of the change of season, the trembling of forests, tree perched on the edge of wall, the symbol of simbal tree, love between moon and chakor bird, peacock and mountain, chirping of sparrows, the murmur of flowing rivers, the fish-water metaphor to describe love between Soul and God, swan, rain on dunes, the crow pecking the skeleton of a cadabre, wild thorns and what not. There is hardly any metaphor or simile which has

been left out in the description of nature's beauty. To express his love for the Supreme the guru has used the simile of ambrosial hour imbued with the naam of the Divine:

chirhee chuhkee pahu futee vagan bahut tarang.

achraj roop santan rachay naanak naameh rang. ||1||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 319)

In near future we shall hear a lot about the organization or seminars, lecture-series, nagar keertans, gurmat samagams, khalsa marches etc. but in the din of these celebrations we shall not be able to notice the beauty of nature depicted here and there in Guru Granth Sahib. Why are we failing to be guided by the scripture in modern age when simplicity, self-restraint and moral values have vanished altogether and hypocrisy and ostentation are reigning supreme. As a result, man is growing more and more wild and avaricious.

But in the desert like conditions also we find an oasis here and there. Today also, we hear the music of sparrows chirping on verdant trees. The spectacle of Khadoor Sahib reminds us of the same Rai Bhoi Talwandi or it transports us back on the wings of imagination to the Kartarpur of 550 years back. The Kar sewa functionaries have grown conventional trees like peepal, jamun, banyan, neem, tahli etc. in the radius of every ten kilometers on each road leading to Khadoor Sahib. There can be no better tribute to Guru Nanak Dev- the ardent lover of Nature. Baba Sewa Singh- the Holy man behind this eco-friendly enterprise has made all arrangement of timely irrigation, pruning and manuring these plants. To protect them from wayard cattle iron-gauze fencing has been provided and the participation of the farmers of nearby lands has also been acquired to take care of the plants. Walking through these groves one feels impelled to bow before the farsightedness of the reverend gurus and simultaneously benefits from the fragrance of flowers and pure air. The beauty of nature is feast for the eyes. Such attempts on the pattern of Khadoor Sahib must be made near places like Amritsar, Fatehgarh Sahib and Chamkaur Sahib also. A little contemplation on the description of the greatness of nature as described in Guru Granth Sahib would reveal how man is incomplete without the

bounties of nature provided to us free of charge by the Creator.

A study in to our ancient past reveals that our sages and seers would spend their whole life in the lap of nature on mountains, in the forests etc. It was not for nothing that Tagore developed Shantiniketan, an idyllic place to learn more from nature than books. The way modern man has destroyed nature in the name of development is not pardonable at all.

The gurus and prior to them other men of enlightenment have exhibited their passionate love for nature. The medieval poets too have expressed themselves in right earnest through nature. Hindi and English literature are very rich in this respect.

The life of the tenth Master Guru Gobind Singh's forty two years life is a saga of his achievements in various fields like literature, battlefield and patriotism. The credit for his marvelous success goes to the company of great Indian rivers he enjoyed every moment. The great saint soldier shook India out of a state of inertia through his valour of pen and sword. Guru Nanak Dev's gospel of universal brotherhood "Na hum Hindu na Musalmaan" had also become manifest from the river Bein of Sultanpur. The mention of this river would remain confined to the pages of history if Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal had not taken the initiative of resurrecting it. In its present form Bein reminds us of the geographic scene of Guru Nanak's times with verdure, flora of several kinds, traditional Punjabi trees, Persian wheel etc. Every time I go abroad, I feel that all beautiful cities of the world whether Bombay, Calcutta, Sanfrancisco or New York look more beautiful because of their situation on the sea coast. A thing of beauty is a joy for ever, it is said. Similarly, nature is a source of joy and excitement for us. Let us not disassociate ourselves from Mother Nature in the mad race called development. On the occasion of 550th birth anniversary, let us imbibe the message of our gurus and love nature to enjoy its maternal love for us and in the overall interest of healthy longevity.

GURU NANAK- A PROPONENT OF UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

Pri. Kulwinder Singh Sarai
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Bhangala (Jalandhar)

Guru Nanak Dev's message is universal. It calls for the welfare of all (Sarbat da bhala.). It does not denote the well being of only Hindus, Sikhs or Muslims. It encompasses mankind as a whole. Why only mankind, it includes the welfare of all fauna and flora of the universe as well. The guru started his compositions with Ek Onkar which implies unity that defies all duality.

saa jaat saa pat hai jayhay karam kamaa-ay.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1330)

This message needs be comprehended and propagated in its real context.

Guru Nanak traveled far and wide to disseminate his preaching. So he held a dialogue with Siddhas, pundits and ulemas. He eulogized the toil of Bhai Lalo and transformed the demonic men like vali Kandhari, Sajjan- thug, Toomia-the thief and Kauda the evil incarnate.

ghaal khaa-ay kichh hathahu day-ay.

naanak raahu pachhaaneh say-ay. ||1||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1245)

And

jay jeevai pat lathee jaa-ay.

sabh haraam jaytaa kichh khaa-ay.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 142)

Gur Nanak was a great communicator. He knew how to convince the other. In modern times when everybody is restlessly eager to have the last word during conversation, the guru's method of dialogue becomes all the more relevant.

There was no chasm between the word and deed of Guru Nanak Dev. He gave precedence to manual labour as a householder over a reclusive existence. By ploughing the fields in

spite of old age he set the ideal that one should keep working till last breath. Guru Nanak laid great stress on the moral conduct of man by saying:

sachahu orai sabh ko upar sach aachaar. ||5||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 62)

But still one thing above truth is the conduct of man. A man with loose character cannot contribute towards social reform.

Guru Nanak Dev asks man to adopt religion in the real sense of the word. In childhood he stops the pundit from making him wear the sacred thread saying:

da-i-aa kapaah santokh soot jat gandhee sat vat.

ayhu janay-oo jee-a kaa ha-ee ta paaday ghat.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 471)

He condemns the social evils plaguing the society with full force:

so ki-o mandaa aakhee-ai jit jameh raajaan.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 471)

He has shown utmost respect for women. The dismal environmental scenario today reminds one of his words:

pavan guroo paanee pitaa maataa Dharat mahat.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 8)

Abiding by the spirit of this message will put an end to the environment crisis staring the society in the face.

Guru Nanak accorded paramount importance to shabd as the guiding force of man i.e. 'shabd guru' by reciting 'Shabd guru surat dhun chela'. Today shabd guru is governing the life of us all as guru manifest in the form of Guru Granth Sahib. The guru did not pay attention towards amassing wealth. The mughals contemporary to the gurus built overawing forts in the country. Now a days, when we are going to celebrate 550th. birth anniversary there is none to claim inheritance of the forts while Guru Nanak's heritage is gaining expansion day by day.

Instead of indulging in unnecessary controversies, the

guru stressed on bowing before the will of God and serve mankind:

mandaa kisai na aakhee-ai parh akhar ayho bujhee-ai.

moorkhai naal na lujhee-ai. ||19||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 473)

vich dunee-aa sayv kamaa-ee-ai. taa dargeh baisan paa-ee-ai.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 26)

hukam rajaa-ee jo chalai so pavai khajaanai.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 421)

Guru Nanak Dev calls himself 'shayar" i.e. poetry and describes his poetry as originating from the divine source.

naanak saa-ir ayv kahat hai sachay parvadgaaraa. ||2||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 660)

jaisee mai aavai khasam kee banee

taishraa karee gi-aan vay laalo.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 722)

Guru Nanak's gospel is people-friendly, nature-friendly and adores nature:

gagan mai thaal rav chand deepak banay

taarikaa mandal janak motee.

Dhoop mal-aanlo pavan chavro karay

sagal banraa-ay foolant jotee. ||1||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 13)

Guru Nanak linked man to Akalpurkh and urged the people not to worship any other god or goddess:

ja-o ta-o paraym khaylan kaa chaa-o.

sir Dhar talee galee mayree aa-o.

it maarag pair Dhareejai. sir deejai kaan na keejai. ||20||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1412)

Thus we can conclude that to save humanity from further degeneration we have to abide by Guru Nanak Dev's teaching:

Kirt karo (Work hard), Naam japo, (Always remember the name of God) and Vand chhako (Share with the needy).

Now that we are privileged enough to celebrate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev let us improve the quality of our life by translating the teachings of the Master into practice. Yes, let us grow more trees, say good bye to intoxicants, work hard and partake what we earn with the needy. This would in fact be the real tribute to Guru Nanak Dev.

SULTANPUR LODHI- THE PROUD CITY

Giani Kaur Singh Kothaguru
Bathinda (Punjab)

Sultanpur is a sacred and historical city. It has had the privilege of having enjoyed the touch of Guru Nanak Dev's feet. This is what made it a world famous pilgrimage. Satluj and Beas are equidistant from (10 miles each) from Sultanpur. In between two other small rivers viz. Kali Vein and Chitti Vein are also flowing. Sultanpur is situated on the banks of Kali Vein.

It has the vestiges of ancient Vedic era as well. The Vedas and Mantras mention a prayer said by Vishwamitra in the midst of rivers Beas and Satluj urging them not to drench the feet of the sages crossing it. In ancient times both Vein rivers also flowed with full energy like Beas and Satluj. Buddhist literature mentions the existence of Tamsavan here. This is the place which witnessed Alexander-'the Great' retreating after facing defeat at the hands of the martial community of Malwa region.

In about 150 BC Maan Gan Sangh fanned out in Malwa region. A large number of people reached Sultanpur and settled a village named Sarvmaanpur which later emerged as a big city. The coins of 11th. and 12th. century kings of Afghanistan and India found here indicate the ancientness and glory of this place. The sages and seers have been traveling here with the result that monasteries and temples kept emerging there.

Under the influence of Islam and during the rule of Nasir-ud-din Muhammad Shah Sarvmaanpur was rechristened Sultanpur. During the reign of the Delhi Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi, Daulat Khan Lodhi was the chief governor. This was the time when Sultanpur became the hub of education, trade and politics. Due to the charm of rivers Daulat Khan Lodhi ket his residence here instead of Lahore.

Guru Nanak Dev ji was the chief officer in the modikhana (provision store) of this very Daulat Khan Lodhi. The guru came to Sultanpur on 30 August 1504 AD and worked here till 30 August 1507 AD. It was due to Guru Nanak Dev that this city turned out to be a pilgrimage. Bhai Gurdas describes Sultanpur

as Sultanpur Bhagat Bhandara and a source of naam and bhagti.

Gurdwara Ber Sahib: Gurdwara Ber Sahib is situated on the banks of Vein River where the guru used to have a bath and meditate in ambrosial hours. One day, the guru brushed his teeth with a twig of ber tree and then pitched it on the river bank. It sprouted and grew into a big tree. Bhai Santokh Singh writes in his Nanak Parkash:

*Aapan te chal neer ke teer pe, dantan dhaavan aan kari,
Gaad dai dhar, hoti bhayo tar hai, ablo bar so badri.
(Poorbarth Adhyai)*

This beautiful beri tree with delicate green foliage is still there on the river bank behind the Gurdwara Ber Sahib. According to Janam Sakhis the guru attained enlightenment at this very place.

Gurdwara Sant Ghat: After a plunge into Vein, the guru had reappeared at this place with the light of the Divine. Sant Ghat is the primal source of the Mool Mantra and Gurbani. Sant Ghat is the gateway to Sachkhand. This gurdwara is situated at a distance of two kilometers from Gurdwara Ber Sahib in the north-south direction.

Gurdwara Hatt Sahib: This is the place where Guru Nanak Dev had served as supervisor in the provision store of Daulat Khan Lodhi. This gurdwara has a good variety of weights used by the guru for performing his duties. These are lying preserved in an almirah.

Gurdwara Antaryamta: This is the place where Nawab Daulat Khan had called the guru for saying namaaz. The Master had come to know through his intuitive powers that the mind of both Qazi and Nawab was not focused on namaaz.

Gurdwara Guru Ka Bagh: Guru Nanak Dev lived here with his family.

Gurdwara Kothari Sahib: The guru was imprisoned here at the complaint of some backbiters that he was frittering away the modikhana.

Gurdwara Bebe Nanaki ji: This gurdwara is built at the place of Bibi Nanaki's residence.

Gurdwara Sehra Sahib: Here Guru Arjan Dev had adorned the head of his son Hargobind with the chaplet in 1604 at the time of his marriage. From her he had left for Dalla.

Conclusion: Sultanpur is a great and sacred land where Sikhism has its origin. It is situated 42 kilometers away from Jalandhar in the southwest. In Mughal period Sultanpur lay on Lahore-Delhi road. Guru Nanak was born in Talwandi but Sikhism and its scripture owe its origin to Sultanpur only. This is what elevates it to the level of pilgrimage.

Sa dharti bhayi hariaavali jithe mera satgur baitha aai.

Se jant bhaye hariaavle jinni mera satgur dekhia jaai.

THE PORTRAYAL OF NATURE IN GURU NANAK BANI

Kavishar Gursewak Singh Dhillon
Sri Bhaini Sahib (Punjab)

Nature is an artistic creation of the Creator. It attracts everybody in general and poets in particular. So it has attracted the attention of almost all the poets but the portrayal of nature in Guru Nanak Dev's poetry is unparalleled and unprecedented so far. His experience of nature was not confined to Punjab alone as during his odysseys he had vast experience of enjoying the proximity of nature in different parts of India and abroad. He enjoyed the bliss of nature in places like Talwandi, Kartarpur, Hassan Abdal, Tulamba, Banaras, Gorakhmata, Haridwar, Ayudhya, Gaya, Guwahati, Dhaka, Mecca, Baghdad etc. The guru has portrayed nature in his bani in a very beautiful manner:

**kudrat disai kudrat sunee-ai kudrat bha-o sukh saar.
kudrat paataalee aakaasee kudrat sarab aakaar.**

.....

**kudrat pa-un paanee baisantar kudrat Dhartee khaak.
sabh tayree kudrat tooN kaadir kartaa paakee naa-ee paak.**
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 464)

Establishing the inter-connectivity between God and Nature the guru has described Him as integral to Nature. He has described nature as the best medium to attain God.

Meaning: O God! All that is visible is your art. This feeling which is the source of all joys too is your nature. It is your nature which dwells in Netherlands and skies. This entire expanse of universe is your play. The elements of nature like air, water, fire, soil etc. are gifts from you only. You permeate everywhere, O God! You are the creator of nature. Your praise is the purest and you too are pious. The guru is of the view that God is truth and due to its belongingness to truth nature too is true. He says:

**jin jag siraj samaa-i-aa so saahib kudrat jaanovaa.
sachrhaa door na bhaalee-ai
ghat ghat sabad pachhaanovaa.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 581)

Meaning: Don't take God who created this world and has kept with Him the power to dissolve it also in Himself as living somewhere far away. See Him dwelling in Nature and every human heart.

**khaanee banee tayree-aa deh jee-aa aaDhaaro.
kudrat takhat rachaa-i-aa sach nibayrhanhaaro. ||2||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 580)**

Meaning: You are the source of all the four sources of life (*andaj, jeraj, setaj, utbhu*) and the creator of the sounds of all living beings. You are the maker of this throne called nature. You are both- the creator and destroyer of life on earth. For your doing you are not answerable to anybody.

**puchh na saajay puchh na dhaahay puchh na dayvai lay-ay.
aapnee kudrat aapay jaanai aapay karan karay-i.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 53)**

Meaning: Neither God made this world by asking somebody nor does He destroy it by asking someone. Neither he infuses life in animate being by asking someone nor does He takes it away in consultation with someone. He is aware of His immeasurable power and done everything Himself. On the contrary Nature is short-lived. Permanent is God only.

**din rav chalai nis sas chalai taarikaa lakh palo-ay.
mukaam ohee ayk hai naankaa sach bugo-ay. ||8||17||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 64)**

Meaning: The day and sun, night and moon all are transient. The stars will also be no more but God is ever lasting. He permeates each mote of dust. It is good to work under his will,

**bhai vich pavan vahai sadvaa-o.
bhai vich chaleh lakh daree-aa-o.
bhai vich agan kadhai vaygaar.
bhai vich Dhartee dabee bhaar.
bhai vich ind firai sir bhaar.
bhai vich raajaa Dharam du-aar.**

bhai vich sooraj bhai vich chand.
 koh karorhee chalat na ant.
 bhai vich siDh buDh sur naath.
 bhai vich aadaanay aakaas.
 bhai vich joDh mahaabal soor.
 bhai vich aavahi jaaveh poor.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 464)

Meaning: The Creator has made nature and He operates it according to his rules. All constituents of nature e.g. air, rivers, fire, clouds, sky, sun, moon etc. are performing their duties under His will. So much so that gods like Indra, siddhas, ascetics, mighty warriors- all are under His subordination.

seehaa baajaa chargaa kuhee-aa aynaa khavaalay ghaah.
 ghaahu khaan tinaa maas khavaalay ayhi chalaay-ay raah.
 nadee-aa vich tibay daykhaalay thalee karay asgaah.
 keerhaa thaap day-ay paatisaahae laskar karay su-aah.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 144)

Meaning: If God wills He can make the carnivores like lion, eagle, charge, kuhia eat grass and the herbivores survive on meat. He can show marvels like emergence of dunes in rivers, inundation of deserts, coronating an insect and burning the legions of militia to ashes. In 22nd. And 25th. pauri(s) of Japuji Sahib, Guru Nanak Dev has presented a beautiful spectacle of nature:

paataalaa paataal lakh aagaasaa aagaas.
 orhak orhak bhaal thakay vayd kahan ik vaat.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 5)

Meaning: These are lakhs of Netherlands upon Netherlands and innumerable skies. The Vedas have talked hoarse telling that countless sages and seers have tire themselves out but failed to reach at the mystery of the Infinite. God dwells in everything in nature. There is no beginning point to this infinity. Guru Nanak says:

purkhaaN birkhaaN teerthaaN tataaN mayghaaN khaytaaNh.

deepaaN lo-aaN mandlaaN khandaaN varbhandaaNh.
 andaj jayraj ut-bhujaaN khaanee saytjaaNh.
 so mit jaanai naankaa saraaN mayraaN jantaah.
 naanak jant upaa-ay kai sammaalay sabhnaah.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 467)

Meaning: The number of four classes of life viz. andaj (born from egg), jeraj (placental), setaj (born from filth) and utbhuj (terrigenous or abiogenic) including men, trees, rivers, clouds, fields, islands, orbots, universe etc. is known to the Creator only. O Nanak ! Having created all these beings He sustains them also. Man is not competent enough to be familiar with the divine play of God. He is only held entranced at the sight of so vast an expanse of nature. Guru Nanak has called it vismaad in Asa Di Var.

vismaad pa-un vismaad paanee.
 vismaad agnee khaydeh vidaanee.
 vismaad Dhartee vismaad khaanee.
 vismaad saad lageh paraanee.
 vismaad sanjog vismaad vijog.
 vismaad bhukh vismaad bhog.

.....

vaykh vidaan rahi-aa vismaad.
 naanak bujhan poorai bhaag. ||1||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 464)

Meaning: Elements of nature like air, water and fire in its various forms invokes awe. Besides, the four classes of life are busy creating life on earth. O God! My mind is wonderstruck at your awe-inspiring marvels. Here you see meeting and there is separation. On one hand people are dying of hunger and on the other some people are eating more than they need. O Nanak! This adventurism of God can be understood only with a quirk of fate. The guru has shown nature dancing before God e.g.

gharhee-aa sabhay gopee-aa pahar kanH gopaal.
 gahnay pa-un paanee baisantar chand sooraj avtaar.
 saglee Dhartee maal Dhan vartan sarab janjaal.

naanak musai gi-aan vihoonee khaa-ay ga-i-aa jamkaal.||1||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 465)

Meaning: Taking the metaphor of time Guru Nanak Dev has taken all watches as gopis and all the pahars of the day as Kahns. Air, water and fire are jewels worn by the gopis. In this cosmic dance the Sun and Moon are two incarnations. The earth as a whole is wealth for this divine dance. Guru Nanak has used the metaphors of doe, koel, fish and she-serpent to express the excessive expression of love.

ray man aisee har si-o pareet kar jaisee jal kamlayhi.
lahree naal pachhaarhee-ai bhee vigsai asnayhi.

.....

ray man aisee har si-o pareet kar jaisee machhulee neer.
ji-o aDhika-o ti-o sukh ghano man tan saaNt sareer.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 59)

Meaning: O my mind! Love God the way fish falls in love with water. More the water, the more fish enjoys. Love God as water and lotus love each other. The lotus gets tossed with the waves of water but still blooms. In Barahmah Guru Nanak Dev has made a very beautiful portrayal of nature:

aagai ghaam pichhai rut jaadaa daykh chalat man dolay.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1109)

Meaning: Summer has passed and winter is coming ahead. It makes me restless.

sooraj ayko rut anayk.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 13)

Meaning: The sun is only one but seasons are more than one. This is also the wonder of nature.

kar kar vaykhai sirjanhaar.
naanak sachay kee saachee kaar.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 7)

Meaning: The Creator is looking after His creation after

creating it. O Nanak ! This is the inevitable service of maintaining the creation by Akalpurkh.

kudrat kar kai vasi-aa so-ay.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 83)

Meaning: The Creator dwells in His creation.

The guru has used the metaphor of simbal tree to preach humility and sweetness of demeanor:

simmal rukh saraa-iraa at deeragh at much.

o-ay je aavahi aas kar jaahi niraasay kit.

fal fikay ful bakbakay kamm na aavahi pat.

mithat neevae naankaa gun chang-aa-ee-aa tat.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 470)

Meaning: The simbal tree is very tall and thick. The birds perch on it with the hope of eating the fruit. But both the flowers and fruit of this tree are not eatable. Its leaves too are good for nothing. So Guru Nanak says that not strength or tallness but sweetness of temperament or humility is the essence of all human qualities. Guru nanak says in Japuji sahib:

keetaa pasaa-o ayko kavaa-o. tis tay ho-ay lakh daree-aa-o.

kudrat kavan kahaa veechaar. vaari-aa na jaavaa ayk vaar.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 3)

Meaning: Going by His will God has created this world. Lakhs of rivers flow under His will only. How can I describe your creation i.e. nature" I am not able to know or admire your creation. I can't even forgo myself for you. Only that which is liked by you is the best deed. In other words it is always good to live in your will.

The above description reveals Guru Nanak Dev's intense love for nature. He has given a very vivid description of Nature by employing beautiful similies and metaphors. As nature has a great role to play in human life, Guru Nanak's bani too is replete with the description of nature.

FORMATIVE ASPECT OF HUMAN RELATIONS IN NANAK BANI

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Guru Nanak Dev has used human relations as a solid medium to express his spiritual concerns. The use of human relations as a medium of expression is important because the relation between man and God has been portrayed as a conjugal relationship. In this equation Akalpurkh or God is the husband while man is treated as woman i.e. wife. This relationship has been adopted at a conscious level because it is the source of perpetuating the world. Dr. Amarjit Singh Kaang- an authority on medieval literature says with reference to Zaehner: "In coitus, the husband and wife undergo a mystical experience as this is the moment when man dissolves his existence into the other and in the process he creates exactly as God had created man and universe through his creative faculty."

That is why Guru Nanak Dev has built two symbols *Suhagan* (woman with a living husband) and *Duhagan* (widow) to describe '*gurmukh*' and '*manmukh*'. Dr. J.S. Grewal writes in this regard: "Guru Nanak and his successors use the female voice and many of their metaphors and similies are drawn from conjugal life. The wife who is not loved by her husband is unfortunate and miserable; she is the *Duhagan*. The one who is loved by her husband is fortunate and happy; she is *Suhagan*. The *duhagan* who is engrossed in *maya* is compared to the wall of saline oil which goes on falling bit by bit."

Guru Nanak Dev writes in this regard:

**Dhan sohagan naar jin pir jaani-aa jee-o.
naam binaa koorhi-aar koorh kamaani-aa jee-o.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 689)

In these lines the guru has characterized that human soul as *suhagan* who has the dwelling of *naam* in his heart and who remembers Him all the time. According to the guru the main goal of man is to reach the state of *suhagan*. The metaphor of *duhagan*

has been built by the guru to denote *manmukh* who is engrossed in *maya*. The nature of metaphors used by the guru is reflected as God and the soul separated from Him e.g. the following *pada* in raga Maru:

**sakhee sahaylee garab gahaylee.
sun sah kee ik baat suhaylee. ||1||
jo mai baydan saa kis aakhaa maa-ee.
har bin jee-o na rahai kaisay raakhaa maa-ee. ||1|| rahaa-o.
ha-o dohaagan kharee ranjaanee.
ga-i-aa so joban Dhan pachhutaanee. ||2||
too daanaa saahib sir mayraa.
khijmat karee jan bandaa tayraa. ||3||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 990)**

In the above lines Guru Nanak Dev has tried to convey his spiritual message through metaphors like *sakhi*, *saheli*, *maai*, *duhagan* etc. Before whom can a *duhagan* i.e. a soul separated from God, lay bare her anguished heart? Those separated from their husbands become shelterless while the blessed *suhagan* enjoys the bliss of husband's company because of her good deeds.

Guru Nanak describes the plight of a *duhagan* in the following lines as a woman who wanders in the wilderness of *maya* by bedecking herself with ornaments outwardly:

**duhaagane ki-aa neesaanee-aa.
khasmahu ghuthee-aa fireh nimaanee-aa.
mailay vays tinaa kaamnee dukhee rain vihaa-ay jee-o. ||7||
sohaagane ki-aa karam kamaa-i-aa.
poorab likhi-aa fal paa-i-aa.
nadar karay kai aapnee aapay la-ay milaa-ay jee-o. ||8||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 72)**

Guru Nanak has shown through metaphors of *suhagan* and *duhagan* the difference between the blessed ones enjoying the favour of God and those who separated from Him suffer for their misdeeds till they win His benediction back. The guru tells that they are nothing in practice though they talk well:

**galeeN asee changee-aa aachaaree buree-aah.
 manhu kusuDhaa kaalee-aa baahar chitvee-aah.
 reesaa karih tinaarhee-aa jo sayveh dar kharhee-aah.
 naal khasmai ratee-aa maaneh sukh ralee-aah.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 85)

The guru has urged man to tread the path of righteousness by using the imagery of feminine attributes. If he has presented the *duhagan* form of human soul he has juxtaposed *suhagan* also to motivate human soul to be upright. The gurmukh who has faith in God must be like a well-behaved, gentle and obedient woman so as to win favour of her husband. Gurmukh is like a *suhagan* who enjoys the embrace of her husband. In fact, being *suhagan* implies a lot of responsibility also. She is supposed to admire her husband among others what we call *saadh sangat* in religious parlance. Word '*sakhi saheli*' has been used for *saadh sangat* by the guru.

**pir saalaahē aapnaa sakhee sahaylēe naal.
 tan sohai man mohi-aa ratee rang nihaal.
 sabad savaaree sohnee pir raavay gun naal. ||3||**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 85)

Guru Nanak Dev has shown wonderful gender equality in his poetry but as far as the metaphor goes, the guru views *bhagat* or devotee as a conventional wife who pines to win favour of her husband i.e. God. She is unable to decide how to adorn herself to attract him. The beauty of nature aggravates her pangs of separation. Unable to bear it she removes all her make-up, ornaments etc. and breaks to pieces her bangles by hitting them against the bed. The following lines give a picturesque description of this state of her mind:

**choorhaa bhann palangh si-o munDhay san baahee san baahaa.
 aytay vays karaydee-ay munDhay saho raato avraahaa.
 naa manee-aar na choorhee-aa naa say vangoorhee-aahaa.
 jo sah kanth na lagee-aa jalan se bahrhee-aahaa.
 sabh sahee-aa saho raavan ga-ee-aa ha-o daaDhee kai dar jaavaa.
 ammaalee ha-o kharee suchjee tai sah ayk na bhaavaa.**

maath guNdaa-eeN patee-aa bharee-ai maag sanDhooray.
agai ga-ee na mannee-aa mara-o visoor visooray.
mai rovandee sabh jag runaa runnrhay vanhu pankhayroo.
ik na runaa mayray tan kaa birhaa jin ha-o pirahu vichhorhee.
 (Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 85)

In the above lines, Guru Nanak Dev has vividly described the psychic condition of the woman separated from her husband. The memory of the moments of meeting adds to the intensity of separation. Guru Nanak dev has instructed the Self personified as woman through the symbolism of parents' home i.e. this world and the home of in-laws i.e. the other world. God is the husband in this scheme of things. In the in-laws only that soul is endearing to God which bows before His will as *suhagan*:

sasurai pay-ee-ai kant kee kant agamm athaahu.
naanak Dhan sohaagane jo bhaaveh vayparvaah. ||2||
 (Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1088)

According to Guru Nanak the soul attains the favour of God if she has the required virtues. The first prerequisite to win His grace is to know where His comfort lies. Along with the metaphors of *suhagan* and *duhagan*, the guru has also used the adjectives *gunvanti* (virtuous) and *avgunvanti* (non-virtuous). The former wins the love and affection of the husband while he maintains distance from the latter. The former is never abandoned by God:

taribhavan kant ravai sohagan avganvantee dooray.
jaisee aasaa taisee mansaa poor rahi-aa bharpooray.
har kee naar so sarab suhaagan raaNd na mailai vaysay.
naanak mai var saachaa bhaavai jug jug pareetam taisay. ||2||
 (Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 763)

According to Guru Nanak the *sohagan* becomes the object of emulation by others while the *duhagan* who resorts to just chicanery to win over God never invites His grace on her.

kubuDh doomnee kud-i-aa kasaa-in par nindaa
ghat choohrhee muthee kroDh chandaal.

kaaree kadhee ki-aa thee-ai jaaN chaaray baithee-aa naal.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 91)

Guru Nanak has made a liberal use of another metaphor i.e. *maya*. May is the illusion to be or see something which in fact, does not exist at all. Maya has been taken as external attraction or glamour that attracts man. Maya is that will o' the wisp kind of phenomenon which drifts the soul away from its source i.e. God. He has propounded his viewpoint by using the expressions like *kamini* or *sampatti*:

Maya moh sagal jug chhaya
Kamani dekh kaam lobhaya
Sut kanchan seo het badhaya

According to Guru Nanak Dev *kamini* is that form of woman which is linked to its primal instinct. These instincts are five *sakhis* of man who remain huddled in human body. *Kamini* is the symbol of a woman who casts a spell on others and forgets God. Through this metaphor the guru has brought home the point that the soul which gets stuck in *maya* gets away from God:

Kamani kaam na aavai khoti avganiaar
Na sukh paiye sahure jhooth jail vekaar

It is through these feminine metaphors that the theme of Guru Nanak's bani is built. The guru has made antonymal pairs e.g. *suhagan-duhagan*, *suchajji-kuchajji*, *mohni-doomni*, *sohni-choori* etc. *Sohni* (beautiful) is who beautiful does. *Sakhi* means the one who has won the heart of God with her credibility. Similarly *saheli* wins the husband with her love and affection. So these are just the devices to motivate soul on the path of God. The *suchajji-kuchajji* pair occupies a place of prominence in this list of pairs. *Kuchajji jeevatma* i.e. unvirtuous soul gets separated from God because of her uncouth ways. Why should God bother about such souls when He already has *suchajji* i. e. virtuous souls who always remain engrossed in His name? The one who gets love from her husband enjoys the cool shade of mango trees while the *kuchajji* keeps laden with ornaments and does not opt for right means to please her husband. When she reaches her in-laws what shall she have to say in her own defense. She is not even

familiar with the bliss of meeting with God- the husband. But when at last the *kuchajji* transforms in to *suchajji* she attains to God. The following shabd had been recited for Rani Noor Shah, the queen of Assam. Describing the symptoms of *kuchajji* Guru Nanak says:

nj kuchjee ammaavan dosrhay ha-o ki-o saho raavan jaa-o jee-o.
 ik doo ik charhandee-aa ka-un jaanai mayraa naa-o jee-o.
 jinHee sakhee saho raavi-aa say ambee chhaavrhee-ayhi jee-o.
 say gun manj na aavnee ha-o kai jee dos Dharay-o jee-o.
 ki-aa gun tayray vithraa ha-o ki-aa ki-aa ghinaa tayraa naa-o jee-o.
 ikat tol na ambrhaa ha-o sad kurbaanai tayrai jaa-o jee-o.
 su-inaa rupaa rangulaa motee tai maanik jee-o.
 say vastoo seh ditee-aa mai tinH si-o laa-i-aa chit jee-o.
 mandar mitee sand-rhay pathar keetay raas jee-o.
 ha-o aynnee tolee bhulee-as tis kant na baithee paas jee-o.
 ambar koonjaa kurlee-aa bag bahithay aa-ay jee-o.
 saa Dhan chalee saahurai ki-aa muhu daysee agai jaa-ay jee-o.
 sutee sutee jhaal thee-aa bhulee vaatrhee-aas jee-o.
 tai sah naalahu muttee-as dukhaa kooN Dharee-aas jee-o.
 tuDh gun mai sabh avganaa ik naanak kee ardaas jee-o.
 sabh raatee sohaagane mai dohaagan kaa-ee raat jee-o. ||1||
 (Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 762)

In gurbani the relation between soul and God has been likened respectively to that of wife and husband. The guru poet has categorized *gurmukh* and *manmukh* as *suchajji* and *kuchajji*. Describing the qualities of *suchajji* Guru Nanak Dev says:

jaa too taa mai sabh ko too saahib mayree raas jee-o.
 tuDh antar ha-o sukh vasaa tooN antar saabaas jee-o.
 bhaanai takhat vadaa-ee-aa bhaanai bheekh udaas jee-o.
 bhaanai thal sir sar vahai kamal fulai aakaas jee-o.
 bhaanai bhavjal langhee-ai bhaanai manjh bharee-aas jee-o.
 bhaanai so saho rangulaa sifat rataa guntaas jee-o.
 bhaanai saho bheehaavalaa ha-o aavan jaan mu-ee-aas jee-o.
 too saho agam atolvaa ha-o kahi kahi dheh pa-ee-aas jee-o.
 ki-aa maaga-o ki-aa kahi sunee mai darsan bhookh pi-aas jee-o.
 gur sabdee saho paa-i-aa sach naanak kee ardaas jee-o. ||2||
 (Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 762)

GURU NANAK DEV- LIFE AND ODYSSEYS

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Guru Nanak Dev was born in 1469 AD to Mata Tripta at Rai Bhoi Ki Talwandi in district Shekhupura. However, most of the historians put the month of his birth as April with unanimity on the year.

Guru Nanak Dev's birth had dispelled all fog of ignorance engulfing the environment during those days. The name of his father was Mata Tripta while that of his father was Mehta Kalu who was a patwari in Talwandi. At that time there was one Hakam Bhatti, a pious man of sufi ideology. He loved to meet saints, faqirs, naths and yogis. So naturally, the guru had a great opportunity to meet the company of faqirs in his very childhood. As per available sources his life is divided into three parts: 1479 - 1497 AD, i.e. the household segment. He spent this time working like a common man. Even in childhood he had a precocious intellect.

As his education began he is supposed to have asked certain questions from the pundit and the maulavi to which both had no answer. He had learnt a lot in the company of saints, faqirs and thinkers. During yagyopaveet ceremony he asked the priest to give him such a janeu which might restrain his senses once and for all so that once worn he did not have to wear it again. According to the guru the pundit is one who keeps his mind in subordination to the intellect.

Living in his family he did everything that he was supposed to do as a son. He worked in the fields, grazed the cattle and did business etc. While doing all this his mind remained concentrated on God and a new leader of mankind was in the making. To ensure that he engaged himself in mundane affairs, his father married him to Sulakhani daughter of Moola Chona of Batala. From this wedlock he produced two sons viz. Siri Chand (1489) and Lakhmi Das (1497).

But in spite of being a family man now he could not disengage himself from his spiritual pursuits. For ten years he

served in the *modikhana* (provision store) of Sultanpur Lodhi while living with his sister's husband Jai Ram. There also a stage came when he no longer could continue with the job. According to Janamsakhi Nanak would not feel at ease in worldly affairs. He ate less and had a very brief sleep. Suddenly he would start singing a hymn or just sit silent. At times, he would start crying. It worried his father who called a Vaid (Ayurvedic physician). But what could the poor vaid do when the malady lay somewhere else.

Hereafter starts his next phase of life (1497-1521). During this period covering twenty four years he set out on odysseys. He toured to different religious places of India and abroad during these years. It gave him an opportunity to have a dialogue with so many people. The guru conducted four odysseys.

First Odyssey: It ranges from 1497 to 1509. Starting from Sultanpur Lodhi it covered a number of Hindu pilgrimages including Kurukshetra, Pehowa, Mathura, Vrindavan, Banaras, Hariduar, Ayudhya, Delhi, Patna, Kamrup, Gaya, Maldives, Dhanpur, Jagannathpuri, Dhaka etc. On return he visited famous places like Vindh Pradesh, Central India, Jhansi and Gawalior. During this journey he condemned the worthless traditions, rituals, superstitions and idol worship. According to him such practices are as futile as watering barren land.

Second Odyssey: Known as Deccan odyssey it starts in 1510 and spreads over five years. During this tour he mostly visited Buddhist and Jain shrines. The places he visited during this odyssey include Hyderabad, Sirsa, Ajmer, Bikaner, Mount Abu, Indore, Ujjain, Madras, Lanka, Pondicherry etc. On return he visited among others, places like Somnath, Dwarka and Kutch.

Third Odyssey: This one is known as odyssey of monasteries. He traveled to the monasteries from 1515 to 1517 AD. Beginning the journey from Kartarpur he toured to Jammu and Kashmir, Shivalik hills, Sirmaur, Garhwal, Badrinath, Rampur, Bhutan, Nepal, Hemkunt, Tibet etc. During this odyssey he had a dialogue

with *siddhas* and *yogis* and made them familiar with the real purpose of human life.

Fourth Odyssey: This odyssey covered the religious places of Muslims and that too in Muslim attire. It ranges from 1517 to 1521. During this journey the guru toured to Shakarpur, Rohtang, Dera Ghazi Khan and Mecca via Sindh. Also he reached Hassan Abdal and Panja Sahib via Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Kandhar. Here he raised his voice in favour of the unity of mankind for the second time.

Fifth Odyssey: This odyssey covers different places of Punjab including Batala, Deepalpur, Patti, Verowal, Batala etc.

The third part of Guru Nanak Dev's life (1521-1539) is about Kartarpur. Having freed himself from his odysseys he finally settled here. At Kartarpur he not only started leading the life of a common farmer but also made the *sangat* familiar with his experiences. It was here and during this period that he founded Sikhism. He brought about coordination among various faiths like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, yogis, qazis and put them on the track of a common goal i.e. human welfare.

Conclusion: The above analysis reveals that Guru Nanak's life was full of numerous challenges and hardships. It was full of struggle against the discordant forces and out of this struggle he succeeded in achieving his goal of bringing about the welfare of all i.e. '*sarbat da bhala*.'

THE LIFE STYLE OF GURU NANAK AND THE MODERN SIKHS

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Guru Nanak Dev is a perfect role model for everybody and every era in the world. The founder of a religious philosophy, a committed husband, a karmayogi and a successful farmer Guru Nanak emerged as a light house of hope and inspiration for mankind as a whole. But enmeshed in our greed and self centric mundane pursuits we have forgotten his message altogether today while the well-meaning people and the scholars of the world over acknowledge him as messiah and the greatest teacher of humanity. To disseminate his message among the people at large he conducted four odysseys.

The entire life of Guru Nanak is a mirror of his teaching and preaching. His spiritual flight in the bani addresses social concerns and builds in the reader's mind an image of an ideal life. This image is the source of introspection for us whether we are true followers of Guru Nanak or whether we abide by the his teachings in their true spirit. Do we deserve to be called Sikh or we are simply restricted to wearing a Sikh apparel?"

Today when we are on our toes to celebrate 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak this kind of soul searching becomes all the more relevant. Have religious organizations lost their relevance today? Aren't they fogged by hypocrisy and egocentricity? These were the points which need to be clarified today.

As a matter of fact we are out to give his viewpoint a mythical and illogical tinge and thus become responsible to have squeezed his philosophy rather than expanding it. Sikh ideology is needed today more than any other time as it is a philosophy of life which is potent enough to lead a distracted society on to the right track.

A peep into Guru Nanak's life would reveal that he was an elevated soul. While initiating langar tradition by spending the money given to him by his father, Nanak had never even dreamt

that the tradition will turn one day into a hypocritical fad for gratification of personal ego. The already surfeited people are being forcibly fed on the roads in the name of langar. It leads to a lot of food wastage. Moreover, the litter of used plates, cups and other residual matter left on the spot after the langar is over turns out to be an environmental hazard. By the way what do we want to prove by distorting a well-intended tradition like this? Why can't we help the really hungry and needy with the money squandered on such ostentatious 'langars'? Organizations like Khalsa Aid are doing a wonderful job. In most of the gurdwaras abroad, we have almost turned langar into a sumptuous hotel meal and the devotees go there to enjoy the delicious food only. Unfortunately we don't bother to supply langar to the needy or homeless people. Have the so-called Sikh managers/leaders ever given a thought to it?

Guru Nanak started his spiritual life as a householder and asked his devotees not to go in for debauchery. And, here our religious and political leaders are flouting his teachings by getting embroiled in such acts by way of routine. The guru performed his job honestly in modikhana but we feel proud in amassing wealth through unfair means like evasion of taxes or bribery. Then, do we who have said goodbye to the norms of uprightness, deserve to be called the guru's Sikhs?

The 'followers' of Gur Nanak are today flourishing by setting up deras here and there. Has the mool mantra of Japuji Sahib left them totally intact? They call themselves guru and have no scruples in getting worshipped by others. These impostors who commit all kinds of sin in the basements of deras claim communion with God through idol-worship. They are no less than enemies of Sikhism in Sikh apparel. Is this a conspiracy hatched by anti-sikh forces to erode Sikh ethos? Some so-called godmen are raising big empires of their own in collusion with the political powers. Why are we just mute spectators to all these developments?

While setting out for odysseys Guru Nanak took along lowcaste Mardana- the rebec player with him. This was an open challenge to the then caste-ridden society. Keeping a low caste man on a level parity, Guru Nanak took the initiative of turning

social inequality into social parity. But what are we doing now by priding ourselves for being on a higher rung of social hierarchy. We are throwing to the winds the guru's message of universal brotherhood by building different gurdwaras in the name of castes like jatts, Lubanas, Ramdasias, Ramgarhias etc. Has no spark from the gurbani illumined our consciousness? Have we failed to make shabd guru a part of our consciousness? Do we deserve to be called Sikhs?

Guru Nanak conducted four odysseys in all the four directions and addressed the people of different faiths in their language to propagate his message. Logical persuasion was his forte. He spoke the truth dauntlessly irrespective of who was on the listening end- a Malik Bhago, Siddhas, Yogis, Pundits, Ulemas or even the tyrant king Babar. He blunted the prevalent superstitions and futile practices in the name of religion with the sharp edge of his logic. But we, particularly the exegetes gave his logical pleas a tinge of miracle with the result that the very purpose was forfeited. The paradox of the situation is that the so-called 'followers' of the Master who always used the magic wand of logic to persuade others are bereft of the faculty reasoning and logic altogether. At the slightest provocation they tend to pounce on the dissident or threaten him of grim consequences. The practice of celebrating the gurburbs on different dates by the religious organizations has made Sikhs the butt of ridicule all over the world. In fact, we are suffer in awfully from an inferiority complex.

Guru Nanak's dialogue with different kinds of diehard people like siddhas, yogis, Muslim fanatics at Mecca or pundits at Hariduar was a reflection of some Divine effulgence suffusing his personality. His advice to the yogis to be aware of their mundane duties bespeaks of his being a man of balanced personality which is a gateway to spiritual growth.

The entire life of Guru Nanak Dev is the life of a superhuman which is reflected from his bani and life style. Have we ever tried to imbibe his preachings? Has a consciousness like "*Ghaal khai kichh hathon deh*" (Work hard to eat your daily bread and give something to the needy also) ever shaken your conscience? If the concept of partaking your comfort and luxury

with others concretizes, will it not be a revolutionary step towards the establishment of egalitarian society as envisaged by the enlightened guru?

At present we are stripped of all our dignity and self respect. Deprivation of self-respect is no less than a mental death which is far more painful than physical death. We have never learnt anything from Guru Nanak's viewpoint that all eating or drinking is useless if the life is devoid of self-esteem (*Je jeeve pat lathi jaai, sabh haraam jeta kichh khaai*). We have lost much by losing our philanthropic self.

Entangled in his own needs and paucities and unwary of social and economic inequality, injustice and exploitation of labour, modern man has become afraid of raising his voice. Why have we forgotten altogether the leonine courage of the guru to call a spade a spade? Drifting away from our enlightened leaders is burying your thought. And, the burying of thought is the burial of man.

Refusing to have glance into the vastness of the guru's thought, modern man has shriveled to himself. The Sikh today is again enmeshed in the traditions and rituals of yore against which the guru had waged a good enough drive. Ironically, the followers of Guru Nanak- who ridiculed the micro level aarti in the temples by talking about the ever-going cosmic aarti- can be seen with the platters of Aarti with lamps paced in them. It shows how deep the inertia has reached in the psyche of our Sikhs.

The whole life of Guru Nanak Dev was dedicated to meditation, dedication, clarity and he propagated the highest virtues out of this dedication only. As per his principle "*Takht bahe takhte ke laayak*" he refused to be succeeded by his son and preferred to choose Bhai Lehna in stead. Can we ever think of such exemplary sacrifice today? Aren't our religious and political leaders today crossing all limits of decency to keep up their hold on the organization? Then are the principles of Guru Nanak meant for others only or are they supposed to remain buried in books only? We are responsible for butchering the Sikh ideology in Sikh appearance per se. In such a mess what kind of human being is going to emerge can be anybody's guess. Mind it! Only by imbibing the Sikh thought we can follow the footsteps of the

Master. This path is arduous no doubt but it is only by treading on it that we can attain the sobriquet of "*Param Manukh*" i.e. superhuman.

Baba Nanak has struck at the shallowness of character strongly by saying, "*Gallia sin changia aachari buriaah, Manahu kusudha kalia bahar chitviaah*. Are we the same at face and at heart? Do we live in layers? Are we specialists in changing the masks? Who will vouch for human values when everybody is ready to be purchased?

The *shabd* of the guru which explores the multidimensional attributes of superhuman being is the true path of life. But we refuse to adopt this life style. The need of the day is to find expansion of our personality from the vastness of *gur-shabd* and remembering the Holy naam with each breath attain to the height of being superhuman or "*Param Manukh*."

GURU NANAK BANI - A MULTIFACETED STUDY OF 'PATI'

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Guru Nanak Dev was an epoch-maker leader of humanity. His personality was an epitome of various qualities of a social reformer, an all-round artist, an effective preacher, a curious tourist, a poet par excellence and a singer with a melodious voice. He watched the public life from very close quarters and analyzed each and every aspect of it. The India of his times was passing through a phase of social, economic and political upheaval. That is why Guru Nanak Dev motivated the people to face the oppression head on with fortitude.

In addition to being a spiritual leader, Guru Nanak was a poet also. Spreading the message of '*sarbat da bhala*' i.e. general welfare his bani is enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib in 19 ragas. According to scholars numerally his bani comes to 2949 *bands* (stanzas). The break-up of his bani in the scripture is as follows: *Jap, Sodar, Pati raga, Asa, Siddh Gosht, Ramkali Dakhani Omkar, Baramah Tukhari, Alauhnis, Pahras, Aarti, Kuchajji, Suchajji, Tithi, Asa Di Var, Maajh Di Var, Makhar Di Var, Ashtpadis, Chhants, Chaupadas, Sohilas and Shlokas* etc.

Apart from the above there are some other writings also which are associated with Guru Nanak but their authenticity is yet to be proved. This is called kachi bani. It includes *Bansavalinama, Naseehatnama, Sahansarnama, Pran Sangli, Kafis, Rubais, Matra and Sloka* etc.

From among the authentic compositions, Pati is one of his famous banis. Vis-à-vis the content of 'pati,' the Janamsakhi writers and other Sikh historians view 'pati' as autobiographical. It has a special importance in Guru Nanak bani. It is a unique evidence of the guru's creative approach. This *bani* is written in raga Asa wherein the guru has expressed his spiritual thoughts by basing them on different letters of Gurmukhi script. According to Janamsakhis, the teacher Pundit Gopal tried to make him memorize the identity of the alphabet letters by showing the images of material objects. But the guru pupil contended that the

identification with material objects would keep his education unauthentic and temporary. Real education is the one that imparts spiritual values to the pupil. Thus Guru Nanak went to Pundit Gopal, Pundit Brij Lal and Maulavi Qutab Din to have lessons in Devnagri, Sanskrit and Persian but the guru rejected this kind of conventional education after spending some time with these teachers. His sense of reasoning was laudable even in his childhood. He gave new shape to the characters of Gurmukhi script and came out with a new form of alphabet at a tender age. He wanted the pupils to learn about eternal objects in stead of the material objects. In this bani, Guru Nanak Dev ji placed different letters of Gurmukhi alphabet in the beginning of pauris with a view to impart spiritual education. It shows that during the guru's times the order of letters was a bit different than it is today.

ਸ ਏ ਓ ਙ
ਕ ਖ ਗ ਘ
ਚ ਛ ੴ ਝ ਵ
ਟ ਠ ਡ ਢ ਣ
ਤ ਥ ਦ ਧ ਨ
ਪ ਫ ਬ ਭ ਮ
ਯ ਰ ਲ ਵ ਝ
ਹ ਅ

In the distiches (slokas) Gur Nanak Dev has linked together knowledge of language and spirituality. Gurmukhi alphabet has in all, 35 letters and '*pati*' bani too, has been divided into 35 pieces of poetry. The line with "*Rahau*" at the end of every sloka is the central theme of this bani.

sasai so-ay sarisat jin saajee sabhnaa saahib ayk bha-i-aa.

sayvat rahay chit jinH kaa laagaa aa-i-aa

tinH kaa safal bha-i-aa. ||1||

man kaahay bhoolay moorh manaa.

jab laykhaa dayveh beeraa ta-o parhi-aa. ||1|| rahaa-o.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 432)

As per the order of alphabet the first shloka of this bani starts with "ਸ" wherein the guru says that the Akalpurkh who created the universe is the master of all. Those who acknowledge

the will of God, serve Him with true spirit and keep Him always in mind come true to the relevance of human life. The guru asks man why he has forgotten God. It is only after getting acquitted in His court that you will be treated as man of learning otherwise you will be taken as good as illiterate. The last line with 'Rahau' is the central theme of this bani.

Two pati poetic forms are found in Guru Granth Sahib. The bani of first pati ranges from Page 432 to 434 and the second pati bani was authored by Guru Amar Das. It is available on Page 434 and 435. In Punjabi literature there is no mention of pati anywhere except these two patis. However, in twentieth century some poets have used this form. Guru Nanak Dev initiated the tradition of singing gurnat compositions according to the classical Indian music and after him whichever guru composed bani it was in one or the other raga. At that time Punjab was called Asa Desh also. Therefore, Asa is treated as a raga of Punjab. This bani is recited in ambrosial hours. This practice was started by Guru Anad Dev in the presence of Guru Nanak Dev. Another bani identical to pati is Bhagat Kabir's Baawan Akhri in which Kabir has used 52 letters of Devnagri alphabet to write Bawan Akhri. A poetic form resembling pati is "seeharfi" as per which poetry is written according to the letters of Persian alphabet. In Punjabi, the poets like Sultan Bahu, Hafiz Barkhurdar, Bullhe Shah, Fard Faqir, Hasham Shah, Shah Mohmmad and Qaadar Yaar have used seeharfi technique in their poetry. From a literary and ideological perspective we can say that pati stands for the poetic maturity and uniqueness of the guru's poetry. This bani asks man to see the mundane from the spiritual prism. The guru says in his bani that man is a masterpiece among all other living beings. His coming to this life is not just to enjoy worldly pleasures but to attain immortality by getting liberated from the cycle of births and rebirths. Therefore, he should make the best use of his time in life. Man's inclination towards egocentricity and materialism is attributable to the flawed education system only which ignores education in spiritualism altogether. As a result the student starts treating materialism as the only truth of life and forgets his real aim in life. Therefore, through pati, Gur Nanak Dev provides authentic information to man in each shloka by starting from the first letter of the alphabet to the 35 th.

THE GENESIS - WITH REFERENCE TO GURU NANAK BANI

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After the concept of Supreme Reality comes the moot question of who created this universe or the world? What is its expanse, nature, form end or objective? These basic questions have been addressed by the scriptures of various religions from time to time. In ancient Indian literature the first ever mention in this regard is available the *vedic suktas* but there is no coherence of views in it.

The creation has been variously credited to Agni, Som, Indra, Varuna etc. The nasdiya sukta of Rigveda also gives a very hazy account of genesis. Like Vedas, the Upanishads also do not have harmonious views on this topic of momentous importance. The Jains describe this world as made from the union of several fluids. The Buddhists take world as an independent and mutable entity. According to Charwak philosophy the world is made of four elements of nature viz. water, earth, fire and air. The Jainism-Buddhism- Charwak trilogy does not believe in the existence of God and thus rule out the question of His being the creator. Among six shastras, Nyaya and Vaisheshik take the world as made of atoms. As per Sankhya ideology the Cosmos or universe or world springs out of the union of Purush and Prakriti. The Yoga Sashtra also conforms to this view. Mimamsa philosophy acknowledges the existence of material world but does not imagine any Creator. They treat it as without beginning. According to Advait Vedanta, the Brahman creates God from Maya and then creates world through him. As per Islam, Allah created the world by pronouncing the word "Kun". Like other religions gurbani too has its own perception over this issue. In the research paper at hand we shall discuss the creation with reference to gurbani. This discussion will be based on the writings of prominent writers.

Guru Nanak Dev has given a voluminous writing in the form of his bani which is enshrined in the Adi Granth. This bani is

given under the titles of 19 ragas. The detailed well-known banis are Japuji, Pati, Thiti, Dakhni Omkar, Siddh Gosht, Barah Mah and three vars viz. Raga Asa, Raga Maajh and Raga Malhar. Apart from these banis Guru Nanak's bani includes Chaupadas, Ashtpadas, Sohilas, Chhants and Shlokas. Beside being spiritual, the subject of gurbani throws light on religious, social and philosophical aspects. The gurmat scholars have tried to build the Sikh Theory of Genesis.

Sikh Theory of Genesis: The philosophy that deliberates on the creation of universe is called Cosmology. When this topic is discussed threadbare from gurbani, it is called Sikh Cosmology.

Creation- The Dictionary Meaning: As per lexicon Creation means world, universe, cosmos etc. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha describes its meaning as Composition, Formation, World, Universe etc. Sri Guru Granth Sanket Kosh also conforms to this view.

So by *srishti* or creation we mean whatever is made, the entire material expanse and universe, its activities, objects etc. According to gurbani the time specific situation of the Timeless, Attributed form of the Attributeless is what we call creation. To express creation worlds like bahvsagar, bhaujal, bhaunidhi, dunia, jagat, akaar, sargun, nirgun, sristi, sirthi, pasaara, Brahmand, banat, ghaarat, pasau, rachna, jagg, parpanch, leela, khed, baazi, roop, ves etc. have been used. The above description reveals that by *srishti* we mean the created world which is the manifest form of God.

Pre-Creation Atmosphere: Different religious faiths have divergent views regarding the situation that existed prior to the creation of universe. Rigved says that there was neither 'sat' nor 'asat' in that state. Also there was no manifest world. There was no means to understand the change of day and night. Whatever be the case God was alone- nothing beyond or except Him.

In gurbani also we get almost similar views about genesis. From Gur Nanak Dev's bani in raga Maru we come to know that Brahm was in its attributelss (Nirguna) from before the creation

of universe. It was Brahm all around. It was pitch dark with earth, sky, moon, sun, day, night, air, water, Vedas, Puranas, Smritis, Shastras, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva- all non-extant. There was nothing but Akaal (Timeless) only. He manifested Himself in Inaccessible and Invisible form.

arbad narbad DhunDhookaaraa.

Dharan na gagna hukam apaaraa.

naa din rain na chand na sooraj sunn samaaDh lagaa-idaa. ||1||

khaanee na banee pa-un na paanee.

opat khapat na aavan jaanee.

khand pataal sapat nahee saagar nadee na neer vahaa-idaa. ||2||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1035)

Guru Nanak Dev says very vividly that He alone existed by Himself as the visible cosmos had not come into existence at that time. Since the beginning of the universe He has been sitting situated in Himself for ages in meditation. The guru has described the primordial element as 'sunn' which was the source of the origin of the universe. It is the primeval source of air, water, sun, moon, sky, reproduction through egg, placenta, filth and silt.

sunn kalaa aprampar Dhaaree.

aap niraalam apar apaaree.

aapay kudrat kar kar daykhai sunnahu sunn upaa-idaa. ||1||

And

sunnahu khaanee sunnahu banee.

sunnahu upjee sunn samaanee.

ut-bhuj chalat kee-aa sir kartai bismaad

sabad daykhaa-idaa. ||7||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1037)

Bur here 'sunn' does not mean "nothing". It denotes a situation when Nirguna God was in a state of meditation.

sargun nirgun nirankaar sunn samaaDhee aap.

aapan kee-aa naankaa aapay hee fir jaap. ||1||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 290)

Regarding the situation prio to creation of universe Dr. Taaran Singh writes, "There was only Brahm at that time. He had

the potential to become Purush and Prakriti then. For millions of years He remained in the state of meditation."

There are similar views over this issue in other faiths also. Bible says that there was complete darkness and void in that state. David asked God,

"Where were you before genesis?"

"I was hidden. Then I wished to be revealed and created this universe." God replied.

Similarly in Quran Abi Zarara asked the Prophet, "Where was God before the creation of cosmos?"

"He was in a cloud. He had air neither below nor above Him." The Prophet replied. The above description reveals that before this world came into existence, God existed in His Nrguna form.

The next question in the line is, "When did this creation take place?"

In this regard the Hindus put the figure as 1,96, 08, 53000 years back while the Christians reduce the period to just 6000 years and the Muslims say it was 14000 years ago. Prof. Keral, William Thomas and Prof. Hilner respectively describe this period as 7 crore, 10 crore and 2 crore years. According to Guru Nanak it is not for the man to judge this period of creation. This is something known to God Himself. Pundits, qazis and Yogis are quite ignorant of this fact. Had they known it, they would have mentioned it definitely in Puranas or Quraan.

kavan so vaylaa vakhat kavan kavan thit kavan vaar.

kavan se rutee maahu kavan jit ho-aa aakaar.

vayl na paa-ee-aa pandtee je hovai laykh puraana.

vakhat na paa-i-o kaadee-aa je likhan laykh kuraan.

thit vaar naa jogee jaanai rut maahu naa ko-ee.

jaa kartaa sirthee ka-o saajay aapay jaanai so-ee.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 4)

The limited intellect of man cannot know when this universe came into existence. Only God who created it knows when it was created. The tenth Master has written in a chaupai:

Tumra lakha na jaai pasaara.

Kih bidh saja pratham sansara. (Dasam Granth)

The Process of Creation: Now the question arises how the world was created. Guru Nanak Dev's *bani* presents many an evidence to this effect. In fact the universe was created under His will.

keetaa pasaa-o ayko kavaa-o.

tis tay ho-ay lakh daree-aa-o.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 3)

'Pasau' does not mean that the universe came into existence all of a sudden from non-existence. Pasau means evolution and 'kawao' means word, diktat or 'hukam'. The guru does not take 'hukam' as command the way it is in Islamic, 'kun' i.e. "Come forth". He takes the word 'hukam' as will. It simply means the emergence of the Divine idea which later became *raison d'etre* of universe. According to Guru Nanak the universe as a whole emerged in visible form from the existence of God. God has recreated Himself without any extraneous reason.

Aapine aap saajeo aapine racheo nao.

The creation of universe has taken place with the will of God.

hukmee sehjay sarisat upaa-ee.

kar kar vaykhai apnee vadi-aa-ee.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1043)

All the shapes have taken place under His will as also the origin of all fauna.

hukmee hovan aakaar hukam na kahi-aa jaa-ee.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1)

The guru says that this whole expanse of variegated existence is the product of His will. God created air, then water came from air and it gave life to vegetation. God dwells Himself in His creation.

saachay tay pavnaa bha-i-aa pavnai tay jal ho-ay.

jal tay taribhavan saaji-aa ghat ghat jot samo-ay.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 19)

God is inaccessible. He created and dwells in His creation.

He created the multicolored world of many kinds and in so many ways.

**tooN kartaa purakh agamm hai aap sarisat upaatee.
rang parang upaarjanaa baho baho biDh bhaatee.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 138)

Guru Nanak Dev tells in raga Asa that God created this universe so that creator could see the Creator in the creation.

papai paatisaahu parmaysar vaykhan ka-o parpanch kee-aa.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 433)

Obviously, the universe was created under the will of God. Everuthing is governed by His will.

Universe- Creation of True God: Exploding the conventional myth Guru Nanak has described the world as an abode of the true God. If the Nirakar is true then His creation must be true. How can falsehood come out of truth? If the origin is true the product of the origin too is true. The gur has said it very clearly:

sachay tayray khand sachay barahmand.

sachay tayray lo-a sachay aakaar.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 463)

ih jag sachai kee hai koth-rhee sachay kaa vich vaas.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 463)

aap sat kee-aa sabh sat. tis parabh tay saglee utpat.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 294)

sat karam jaa kee rachnaa sat. mool sat sat utpat.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 284)

The existence of universe is true but in a limit. The creation is not true in the way the Creator is because its existence is subject to time and place. The object in the trappings of time and place does have a life but not for ever. On the other hand the Akaal Purkh is beyond the shackles of time, place, shape etc.

Gurbani uses metaphorical expressions like bubble of

water, wall of sad, mirage, night dream, smoke cloud etc. for *jagat* or the world. Although *jagat* is a bubble of water yet we cannot rule out its existence like a short-lived sea wave which is very much a part of the sea. If man takes wave as everything, nothing will be gained by him because you can become one with water only by becoming water as the existence of water drop depends on water only. Thus worldly power depends on the Supreme Reality. Myriads of waves arise in the ocean and then again become a part of the huge mass. That is why *gurbani* has called the world a cloud of smoke. Everything in the transient world is perishable. Then why get attached to it for nothing? Since the world is the creation of true God, *gurbani* does not ask anybody to abandon it. World is a reality and God permeates it everywhere. But there is no bigger falsehood than forgetting God and getting engaged in the world. **(raam naam bin mithi-aa maano sagro ih sansaaraa. ||1|| rahaa-o.-703)** Dr. Taaran Singh writes, "This world is not smoke cloud, fantasy or just illusion. It's not as 'sach' as Brahm who is '*Adi, jugadi, hai bhi sach and hosi bhi sach*' (He has been eternal since antiquity, is eternal and remain eternal for ever). This is functional under the '*hukam*' (will) of God but it does not mean that He does not exist. The world does exist but it is subject to time, place and cause and effect. This is limited reality. What God does is Truth. Dr. Wazir Singh has said that as per *gurbani* this world is real if presence of the Divine all around is accepted. It is false if we refuse to accept the presence of God in Nature everywhere. **(Nanak vakhano benti tujh baajh koor koor-468)** If the world is real if man acknowledges the existence of God everywhere. This world is false if man forgets God and finds himself mired in vices.

Expanse of Universe: According to Guru Nanak Dev the expanse of the universe is infinite. There are lacs of skies and Netherlands. The creation of God is incalculable. There are countless such universes created by God.

anik puree-aa anik tah khand.

anik roop rang barahmand.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1236)

The infiniteness of Nirankar has been expounded by Bhai Gurdas with the metaphor of Goolar tree.

Goolar andar bhunhana goolar no brahmand vakhane.

Goolar lagan lakh phal ikk du lakh alakh na jaane.

Lakh lakh birkh bageechiahu lakh bageeche baag babane.

Lakh baag brahmand vich lakh brahmand loon vich aane.

Bhai Gurdas explains the infiniteness of universe through the metaphor of goolar tree. The fruit borne by this tree are infested with worms. Verifying his point Bhai Gurdas says that the worms treat this fruit as brahmand. A garden has hundreds of goolar trees and each tree bears hundreds of fruits. There are a number of gardens in one city or village and there are millions of goolar trees in the world which produce trillions of fruit. Similar is the condition of man regarding universe.

The expanse of this material world has been described as infinite in gurbani. The words like *asankh*, *lakh*, *sahas*, *anginat*, *kete*, *koti*, *anant*, *na paravaar*, *amul* etc. are indicative of infiniteness. The 35th pauri of Japuji Sahib describes this infinity by using the word '*kete*':

kaytay pavan paanee vaisantar kaytay kaan mahays.

.....

kaytee-aa surtee sayvak kaytay naanak ant na ant. ||35||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 7)

In nutshell, it becomes clear that Guru Nanak Dev has treated Creation and Creator as inseparable from each other. Universe is the Nirguna in manifest (sargun) form. Indian tradition considers Brahm as separate from Universe but it is different in gurnat. It treats God as permeating the entire creation.

THE MUSLIM DEVOTEED OF GURU NANAK

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It was sheer coincidence that the period of ten gurus (1460-1708) and Mughal Empire (1526-1707) was the same. The aim of Sikhism was to bring Hindus and Sikhs on the same platform. The personalities of substance from both the communities loved each other. Guru Nanak Dev-the founder of Sikhism- too was commonly revered by both communities. A poet has aptly described this situation:

Nanak shah faqir, Hinduan da guru Muslim ka pir.

Guru Nanak was born under the care of a Muslim midwife. His first teacher Hasan was also a Muslim. He lived in the neighborhood of the guru. Since he had no issue of his own, he loved Nanak very dearly. When one day the child Nanak asked him meanings of some Arabic words, he felt small. Then the child Nanak advised him very clearly to remember Allah and forgo all indolence. Even today, the Muslims all over the world remember Guru Nanak as the Allah's minion. Ahmedias respect the guru as a part of their faith. Mirza Sahb Ahmedi has written:

***Bood Nanak aarif mard-e-khuda,
gaz hai majar fakda rah kusha***

A Muslim writer says, "Guru Nanak was a noble old man. He was among the blessed souls whom God Himself serves the sherbet of His grace."

The guru had hundreds of devotees. But here we shall mention some of them in alphabetical order (according to Gurmukhi script):

Ubare Khan: This *pathan* was a resident of Saurian. According to Janamsakhi the guru discussed with him on the topic of the supremacy of Hindu-Muslim. Ubare khan followed the point that Allah's light dwells in us all. He presented a cloth length to the guru with great love. The guru made two sheets out of it and gifted one to his dear companion Mardana.

Abdul Gelani: A renowned faqir of Lahore, he lived on the banks of river Ravi. His father Sayyad Jamal-ud-din had come to settle there from Baghdad. He died in 1535 AD. Guru Nanak reached Shergarh from Multan where Sheikh Abdul Gelani's disciple Dawood Kirsani lived. The guru discussed with Kirsani on the issue of world, joy and sorrow.

Abdul Rahman: This Pir was a resident of Gurdez. He had come to pay obeisance at the tomb of Khalifa Karoon Al Rashid in Mash-had. It was here that he met Guru Nanak. This place is situated on Baghdad- Tabrez road. When the guru and Mardana sat outside the city and did not visit the tomb, it created an unrest and curiosity in the people to know which sect these sadhus belonged to. When asked whether the guru had faith in Prophet Mohammad or Hazrat Ali he described the Prophet as messenger and added that message is always more important than the messenger. The simple folk could not understand Guru Nanak and they took him to Pir Abdul Rahman. The Pir asked the guru whether he was Sunni or Shia. The light of Allah dwells in all human beings alike. Abdul Rahman and Mash-had's disciples were highly impressed with the guru's words. Abdul Rahman served the guru in his *hujra* i.e. room.

Afghanistan Ruler: When Guru Nanak Dev went to Afghanistan during one of his odysseys, the ruler of Afghanistan came to meet him personally. Out of reverence, he offered his crown to him. It is mentioned in the history that the guru had refused to accept the crown but it shows the respect Afghanistan ruler had for he guru in his heart.

Adarman Sheikh: He was the Master of Sheikh Ubare and a big hater of Hindus. He was cleansed of this hatred when he met Guru Nanak Dev.

Imati Saffi: He was one of the hajis who had come to have discussion with the guru in Mecca. He had talked to the guru on Hindu-Muslim issue.

Sajjan Thug: This Sheikh lived in village Tulamba. Situated on

the banks of Ravi, Tulamba (modern Makhdoompur, Multan) which is on the road to Lahore.

Sajjan met the guru with great love and respect but the guru was familiar with his reality. He used to cheat the gullible people. When Guru Nanak recited the hymn: "**ujal kaihaa chilkanaa ghotim kaalrhee mas. (Soohee Mehlaa 1 Ghar 6, page 729)**", the thug came to realize his actuality. At last he fell at the guru's feet and engaged himself in the propagation of Sikhism. **Pothi Mehabaan** describes Sajjan as resident of Deccan land while **Gyan Ratnavali** says he belonged to Hastinapur. But Janamsakhi literature and Sikh tradition describe him as a resident of village Tulamba.

Sharf Imam: He was one of the Ulemas who had discussion with the guru in Baghdad. He was impressed very much with the spiritual ideology of the guru.

Sharf Pathan (Sheikh Sharf): His real name was Sheikh Sharf-ud-din (Shah Sharf). He was born in Iran and passed away in 1332 at Panipat. His mausoleum in Panipat is a famous pilgrimage for the Muslims. **Janamsakhi Bala** calls it Bidar while **Puratan Janamsakhi** puts it at Panipat. This Sheikh was not a contemporary of the guru during whose time Sheikh Id-ul-Kabir was on the Sharf seat. The guru had his discussion with Sheikh Id-ul-Kabir in 1540. The disciples of medieval pirs and faqirs are known with the names of their Masters only. That is why the Sakhikars write his name as Sheikh Sharf only. When the guru and Bhai Mardana came from Panipat, they settled outside the city. Sheikh Sharf discussed with the guru the topics like dervish, life, death etc. at length. Guru Bansaval mentions that the guru had appointed him the propagator of his mission.

Sahvali Kandhari: A miracle man Sahval Faqir of Kandhar is known popularly as Vali Kandhari. He belonged to Hassan Abdal (Panja Sahib). In his background he was from Khurasan and had come for trade with Mirza Shahrukh. Known as Yara Ali also he was very proud of his miraculous powers. He had monopolized the water supply in the area and was a dread for the people. His popularity started eroding with the arrival of Guru Nanak Dev. In

sheer resentment he refused water to Mardana. The guru removed a big stone and a new water source emerged there. It added fuel to the fire of Vali's fury. So he hurled a stone towards the guru from the hill. The guru stopped the rock with his hand. The print of his palm on the rock still lying in the gurdwara Panja Sahib stands witness to the veracity of this incident. Janamsakhi Bala describes the venue of the guru's meeting with Vali as Kandhar while the oral tradition says it was in Hassan Abdal.

Sahu Burran: On the banks of Chenab there used to live a faqir of Chaneot named Sah Burran. During meeting with him, the guru preached remembrance of Waheguru with every breath, preach shabd to his (Burran's) disciples and say prayer after preparing Karah Parsad.

Kamal Sheikh: He was a disciple of Shekhav Abraham occupying the seat of Sheikh Farid. He had come to gather fuel wood to prepare food for his Master. At that time Guru Nanak and Mardana were singing the following hymn while sitting in an open space:

Aape pati alam aap upar lekh bhi tu
(*Malhar, Mahla 1, 1291*)

Sheikh Kamal listened to this line and memorized it at once. **Janamsakhi Bala** and **Adi Sakhis** describe Kamal Sheikh as Kaamil Darvesh.

Qarim Din: When Gur Nanak Dev had gone to Mecca he had met two persons in the way- Qarim and Rahim. They had a normal meeting with the guru.

Qutab Din Maulavi: He was the Persian teacher of Guru Nanak in his childhood. All the Janamsakhis describe the Turki/Persian teacher of the child Nanak as just Maulavi. It is only Gyan Ratnavali which tells his name as Qutab Din.

Gog Din Imam: He was one of the Ulemas who had a dialogue with Nanak in Madina.

Gaus Qutb Salar: He was also a qazi pir of Madina who participated in discussion with Guru Nanak. It is worth mention here that according to **Janamsakhi Bala**, the guru had stayed in Mecca and Madina for full one year.

Zumma Chopan: When the guru and his companion stayed on a hillock near Madan (Kashmmir) they met a shepherd Zumma Chopan. He called them thieves. "Had you been faqirs you would have come and sat there in the habitation." He said. But when he went back he found his herd in a state of unconsciousness. When he narrated the whole thing to the guru he asked the shepherd to keep uttering "Waheguru" and shaking the rams out of unconsciousness. He did so and fell at the feet of the guru at the sight of this marvel and kept listening to his discourse throughout the night.

Jalal Pir: Pir Jalal was very enamoured of Guru Nanak and held him in high esteem. Pir Jalal said, "Seeing faqirs is seeing Allah." He felt very delighted to have a dialogue with the guru. When he met Guru Nanak, the guru took notice of his piousness and shook hands with him.

Jeewan Qazi: He was a qazi from Mecca. When Baba Nanak and Mardana visited Mecca during the odysseys Jeewan Qazi took a serious note of it and condemned the guru as kafir (apostate). The guru asked him to rotate his feet where Khuda was not existent. It hit the nail and the message was communicated in the desired manner. In **Gyan Ratnavali** Bhai Gurdas has referred to Jeewan Qazi as following:

Jeewan mari lat di kehra sutta kufr kufari. (1/32)

According to **Puratan Janamsakhi** the qazi who rotated the feet of Guru Nanak was Rukandin and not Jeewan.

Tateehar Sheikh: He was the disciple of a Muslim faqir Sharf Pathan. The word 'Tateehar' is known to be a derivative of 'Tahi'.

Daulat Khan Lodhi: Daulat Khan was appointed as governor of Punjab by Ibrahim Lodhi in 1504 AD. He was the son of Tataar

Khan. The area of Sultanpur was given to Daulat Khan as estate. Babar had assured him help for invasion on India. At last he had spoiled relations with Babar. Daulat Khan passed away in 1526. His two sons Ghazi Khan and Dilawar Khan remained with Babar. The remnants of Daulat Khan's fort were now visible in Sultanpur. Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi was an influential and hereditary Afghan. Guru Nanak's sister was married to Jai Ram, one of his officials. Jai Ram appointed Nanak as a caretaker to take care of the Nawab's ration. The guru discharged his duties with full responsibility. His , cordiality, uprightness and honesty became a talk of the town in no time. This much of appreciation could not be digested by some people. Exasperated they went to the nawab and said, "Nanak has stocked out foodgrain from the stores." But when probed, the record was found correct. The guru said to nawab there was no Hindu or Musalmaan there. The nawab was madly in love with Nanak. At last, the guru decided to abandon his job in the modikhana and dedicate himself hundred per cent towards the dissemination of his divine message. When Daulat Khan came to know about this decision he said to Nanak, "This is my bad luck that an official like you has resorted to mendicancy." The history stands testimony to the fact that the nawab recruited several officials at Gruru Nanak's recommendation. On the occasion of Guru Nanak's marriage Daulat Khan gave a lot of cash and kind. Once the nawab was saying namaaz and simultaneously he worried lest the heifer of his mare should fall in the well. The guru pointed it out to him that he was thinking about the heifer during namaaz. It shook his conscience so much that he became the guru's disciple for ever. In Janamsakhis Daulat Khan has been mentioned mostly as Khan only. Nawab Daulat Khan later became full-fledged governor of Punjab with Lahore as its capital.

Dawood- the Weaver: He was a devotee of Guru Nanak. When the guru returned from Mecca he conferred Paatshahi on a shepherd at Shikarpur. It was here that a weaver named Dawood came and gifted him a carpet prepared by him. He had no issue. So he expressed his desire before the Master who covered a bitch shivering with cold with the same carpet and blessed him.

Dastgir Pir: The man who had a dialogue with the guru in Baghdad is mentioned as Dastgir. Gyan Ratnavali mentions with reference to Bhai Gurdas, "*Puchhya phir ke dastgir kaun faqir kis ka ghariana.*" (1/35). The sobriquet of the founder of Qadri sect is 'dastgir'. Sheikh Abdul Qadar Gilani is known to be the founder of this sect. He belonged to Baghdad and his period is supposed to be from 1078 to 1166 AD. When the guru went to Baghdad, Mohammad Gau with whom the guru had a conversation, was the descendent at that time.

Faiz Talib Khan: Nawab Faiz Talib Khan was the nawab of Junagarh. In Chet vikrami the guru went to Junagarh. The nawab felt very happy to listen to his words and honoured him. The nawab kept the wooden sandals of the guru as souvenir. These sandals are still lying preserved in an inn near the fort. The Nanakshahi faqirs worship this souvenir. The nawab had started langar in villages and cities at the bidding of the guru.

Bahavadi Pir: His actual name was Makhdoom Sheikh Bahauddin. This was the position of the famous Pir Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria known as makhdoom. Puratan Janamsakhi mentions Pir Bahavadi as Makhdoom Bahavadi also. When Guru Nanak Dev visited Multan at the place of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria, Makhdoom Bahavadi was going to say namaaz. He sent the message through his servants that he would meet the guru after saying namaaz and that he should not leave without seeing him. On return Pir Bahavadi asked whether God was in Hindus or Muslims. At this the guru preached to him the omnipresence of God. According to **Puratan Janamsakhi** when the guru was asked about the concept of gurmukh, the Master said that gurmukh is the one who lives in the will of God. **Gyan Ratnavali** places Guru Nanak's meeting with Makhdoom Bahavadi in Mecca. Probably, these Pirs of Multan were also on their visit to Mecca during those days. He was already known to the guru. That is why he said that he should not leave without meeting him.

Bahavali Haq: He was also one of those Pirs who had a dialogue with Guru Nanak in Multan. He asked the guru about the reality of maya and practice. The guru said that both were false. Only the

name of God is true, he said.

Buddhan Shah: Baba Buddhan Shah, a Muslim faqir was a great adorer of Guru Nanak Dev. He presented goat milk to the Master who accepted it gracefully. It finds mention in the books entitled **Guru Bansavali and Gurdham Deedar**.

Babar Zaheer-ud-Din Mohammed: Babar (1483-1530) was the founder of Mughal regime in India. The Janamsakhis describe him Mir Babar also. According to Sikh history, Guru Nanak Dev met the guru in 1520 when Babar had invaded Saipur. Babar was a *chughta turk*. The **Janamsakhis** refer to Babar only in the context of Babar bani composed by the guru. According to Puratan **Janamsakhi** and **Gyan Ratnavali** the guru was held captive but was acquitted at the sight of miracles like auto-revolving of the millstones or the bundle of grains not touching his head in gross defiance of the theory of gravitation. When the mughal forces apprised Babar with this quality he is reported to have said that 'if such a great soul lives here I would never plunder this city. It is said that out of penitence Babar touched the feet of the guru and said that divinity oozed from his face. All the Musalmaans and Hindus bowed before the guru. Babar asked him to ask for something. The guru asked Babar to release all the prisoners of Saidpur and return their wares. All the prisoners were released and the guru has mentioned this attack. The **Adisakhis** have characterized Babar as a very fine personality saying that he meditates at night and labours hard for his livelihood.

Babar ne baabe miley niv niv sabhe nawab nivaya.
(*Vaaran Bhai Gurda*, 26/21-2)

Brahm Sheikh: His actual name was Sheikh Abraham who was the 11th in Baba Farid's line of succession. The guru met this Faqir in Pakpatan and wrote 'Asa Di Var' in this connection. Gyan Ratnavali has shown Guru Nanak's meeting with Sheikh Abraham twice and has described him as the grandson of Baba Farid.

Biraham Khan: He was the son of Sikandar Khan Lodhi who

ruled over Delhi from 1517 to 1526. As per Janamsakhi Bala, when Guru Nanak offered water in the opposite direction at Hardwar, some Brahmins approached Biraham Khan that a Hindu faqir having no faith in Vedas or other scriptures was blaspheming the religion. The king ordered the guru's arrest but when he himself experienced the greatness of the guru he was released.

The Muslims of Mecca: In Mecca Guru Nanak had a well-meaning discussion with the Muslim ulemas. Kaaba is known to be the abode of Khuda. It is a crime to sleep with your feet towards Kaaba. But the guru never meant to hurt the religious sentiments of anybody. As a good communicator he simply wanted to bring home the point that God dwells everywhere, not in a particular direction. He performed the haj with great religious fervor and exactly following the Hajis' dress code.

Bhai Mardana (1459-1534): He remained the companion of Guru Nanak Dev for a long time during his odysseys in the country and abroad as well. He was born to Mata Lakho. According to Bhai Gurdas, "**Ik baba akaal roop dooja rababi Mardana**" (1/35). He attained the status of 'Bhai' by playing rebeck with the guru. The **Janamsakhis** give out a detailed information on this issue. It was the guru only who bought him a rabab. He was ten years older than Guru Nanak. He played with the divine bani of the Master as it dawned on him. Bhai Mardana passed away after a brief illness in 1534 AD at Kartarpur. His body was consigned to the flowing water of Ravi as per his own wish. History stands witness to it that he was the dearest friend to Guru Nanak.

Mian Mittha: Mian Mittha was a pious soul. A devout Sikh of Guru Nanak, he belonged to Pasrur (Sialkot, Pakistan). He met the guru as he was passing through his village. He was accompanied with Bhai Moola also. According to Puratan Janamsakhi Mian Mittha said that only two names are great Khuda and Paighambar. Some other things also came up for discussion. After a brief sojourn with him, the guru came to Talwandi. The guru wrote to him in reply that the first name was that of Khuda at whose threshold

number of paighambar are waiting to be accepted. He would often compliment Guru Nanak saying, "Nanak ji, you have been conferred greatness and you ARE great."

Mutaza Ali: It was the name of Prophet Mohammad's daughter Bibi Fatima's husband. He belonged to Sayyad family and was one of the four Khalifas of Islam. According to Janam sakhi Mehrvaan when the child Nanak went to have lessons from the Mulla, the latter referred to Murtaza Ali.

Murad Faqir: When the guru went to Baghdad he settled outside a cemetery. During his journey to Mecca and Madinahe had reached here. In Baghdad the descendents of Pir Dastgir and Bilol became devotees of Guru Nanak Dev. A *khutba* (sermon) written both in Persian and Turkish, is available even today. The overall control of this monument is held by Majid Yussouf. Swami Anand Ucharya had written a poem under inspiration from this very *khutba* in 1919. The followers of Guru Nanak are called 'safis' who lived in Alkot and banks of the the river in Baghdad. The guru lived in Baghdad for four months at a stretch. Here he had a number of sittings with the scholars. They asked him, "How will you spell Mohammad in Ilm-e-Abjad?"

The guru replied to this question as under:

*Naam jo jis hindse ka karlo chauguna
Do aur mila lo phir kar lo panch guna
Bees se uda lo baki kar lo nau guna
Is mein do aur mila lo
Nanak is tarha naam Mohammad bana lo*

At the time of departure from Baghdad the scholars gifted him a beautiful robe with the verses of Quraan written on it. This robe is still lying at Dera Baba Nanak. This inscription was repaired by Murad Faqir.

The Faqirs of Multan: When Guru Nanak Dev returned from Mecca, he reached Multan. There two faqirs brought a bowl full of milk and placed near him. It was to suggest symbolically that Multan was already overflowing with faqirs with no room for anyone from outside. The guru put some sweetener and a flower

in the bowl. He replied in a way that he would be no hinderance for anybody and remain dissolved like sugar and unaffected like the flower. It delighted the faqirs and they honoured him wholeheartedly. The Muslims of Multan have built a monument to commemorate Guru Nanak. This mirrors their love for the guru.

Farid Kamaal: When Guru Nanak Dev ji visited Kashmir during his odysseys he came across a faqir Kamaal. He was very much impressed his spiritual prowess. He kept propagating Sikhism in Kashmir in tandem with Pundit Brahm Das. He bowed before the divine effulgence of the guru.

Rai Bular: In the middle of fifteenth century the chieftain of Talwandi Rai Bhoi was a Bhatti Musalmaan Rai Bular. Guru Nanak was born here in 1469. Rai Bular respected Guru Nanak from the core of his heart. He told Mehta Kalu, "Your son is a great man. And, this is my privilege." Once, Rai Bular sought Guru Nanak's blessings with folded hands for begetting a son. After a brief pause the guru blessed him saying that his wish would be fulfilled. In lieu of it he transferred half of his landed property in the name of Guru Nanak and announced it in a big gathering. This is a reality that the tillers and owners of this 18750 acres of land are Bhatti sardars but on record it is in the name of Nanak. Mehta Kalu was a patwari of ten villages. The Janamsakhis portray Rai Bular as a very great man. After Bibi Nanaki it was only Rai Bular who could see the Divine in Guru Nanak.

Rukandin Qazi: Qazi Rukandin was a Muslim qazi from Arab countries. He met Guru Nanak when he went to Mecca Madina. Ain-ul- Aabdin's book "Twareekh-e-Arab" mentions in detail that as amny as 360 questions in Arabic language came up for discussion between them. The questions pertained to religion, music, dress etc. Rukandin was imbued with divinity as a result of his meeting with the guru. He engrossed himself in meditation all the time. He started enjoying the solitude of mountains like recluses. He became a Sikh of Guru Nanak. When Amir Shah of Mecca came to know about it the radical priesthood charged him of apostasy and issued a verdict against him. He was forced back

from the mountain caverns and the following verdicts were issued against him:

1. He is as much kafir as his *murshid* (Master).

2. Punishment of 30 flogs, emaciation of 11 days and solitary confinement

3. Banishment of his *khwesh* tribe.

4. Confiscation of his property.

5. Parading in Mecca with a blackened face.

6. Hanging upside down.

7. Burying in the sand up to throat and stoning to death.

Braving all the punishment stoically in May June Qazi Rukandin remained unruffled. There was no trace of sadness on his face. Finally, he was ordered to get his last statement recorded on the 22nd day. Pen and ink was brought. The qazi came out of his entranced consciousness. He saw and remembered the words of his Master, "Propagate what you have experienced." What else could be the better opportunity? All the people of Mecca were there on the occasion. So the statement was recorded in the august presence: "My God, my religion, my faith is Nanak only. He is the owner of the biggest pen and book. I am his follower. If you want salvation, come to his refuge. Whosoever acts upon my advice will go to paradise. Saying this he abandoned his temporal frame. The people who had come there with stones in their bags fell at his feet. Most of the peoples present there became the devotees of Guru Nanak. The descendents of Rukandin Qazi still live in Mecca as the devotees of Nanak and like Sikhs they are his suite as well. The banished Khwesh tribesmen are living in the hills of Teerah and Afghanistan these days. The robe gifted to the guru had on it the verses of Quraan and praise to Baba Nanak. In the western corner of Mecca there are three *hujras*:

1. Sultan Bahu

2. Baba Farid

3. Baba Nanak Shah Faqir

A mosque called 'Masjid Vali Hind' exists for the propagation of Guru Nanak's philosophy. Besides, so many other parables are linked to Guru Nanak in Mecca and Madina.

THE PERSONALITY OF GURU NANAK

**Jaswinder Shyar
Paprala, Kaithal (Haryana)**

Guru Nanak Dev was a man of very handsome and impressive personality. He was a man of honeyed tongue. His magnetic attraction endeared one and all. He was a true spiritual Master who put the people steeped in household on the path of spirituality. His teachings and preachings were not meant for a particular segment of people. His message had a universal appeal.

The guru was a perfect combination of yogi and householder. Despite being a householder his attention remained focused on God. He was equally in love with his family also. He worked in his fields like a farmer. He was a responsible husband, a sincere father, an obedient son and a loving brother. These qualities provided a sort of versatility to his personality.

After completing his odysseys Guru Nanak came back and settled at his home to lead a normal householder's life as he did before leaving for his travels. He did not just pray for the welfare of all but did it also on a practical level. The guru was a great social reformer. To liberate people from superstitions and useless rituals he delivered his message in the simple and intelligible language. He told them that God is one and He can be attained by remembering His name, working hard and sharing what you have with others. He condemned all kinds of disparity whether social or economic to bring about an egalitarian society. He said that usurping the right of others is a great sin and that it is against the norms of natural justice also. He said:

hak paraa-i-aa naankaa us soo-ar us gaa-ay.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 141)

Guru Nanak was a paragon of humility. He treated politeness as essence of all other virtues:

mithat neevae naankaa gun chang-aa-ee-aa tat.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 470)

He came true to his word calling himself a dhadi of God. He wrote:

**ha-o dhaadhee vaykaar kaarai laa-i-aa.
raat dihai kai vaar Dharahu furmaa-i-aa.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 150)

He spoke less and conveyed more. His silence was sometimes more eloquent than speech. Also, he was a great patriot. He was very sad to see the plight of his country and castigated the tyrant rulers for this state of affairs. He writes:

ratan vigaarh vigo-ay kuteen mu-i-aa saar na kaa-ee.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 360)

Guru Nanak was a great moralist. He felt that the people were reeling under abundant social, economic and political injustice. So he felt the need to salvage them from the prevailing mess. He told them that the world is not an abode of suffering. Rather it is an abode of God where He dwells Himself. He preached that one need not abandon home and hearth for attainment of peace of mind.

The entire society suffered from a loss of morale. It was not a child's play to extract people from the darkness of ignorance and instill a sense of confidence in them. No ordinary leader could do this. That is why he is held in high esteem even in other countries. He was moved to see the people in suffering. He said that worldly pleasure is not the only goal of human life. Actual goal of life is to gain bliss of the Divine. This was the need of the time as the people were chained in psychic slavery to the extent that they ignored their language and had started speaking the language of the rulers. The contribution of Guru Arjan Dev towards editing the bani into Adi Granth was also motivated by Guru Nanak Dev. To sum up we can say that the guru infused a new invigorating self-confidence in people suppressed by a downed morale.

SPIRITUALIZATION OF FOLK LANGUAGE

(With special reference to the major poetic forms
used in Guru Nanak's Bani)

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Guru Nanak was an epoch maker. He depicted the psychological conflicts of Punjabi society through his poetry. Rather than going by the classical norms prevalent at that time he preferred to deliver his message through the popular language and poetic forms. The form and content of his poetry is associated with the symbols taken from social life but their context is spiritual. He has used the poetic forms like Var, Barahmah, Pahra, Thiti, Alauhni, Sohila, Aarti, Kuchajji, Suchajji, Chhant, Shloka, Pada, Kafi, Patti, Gosht etc. Here is an endeavor to see from what perspective the guru used these folk forms and what he preached.

Thiti: According to Sahib Singh the word 'Thiti' owes its origin to the Sanskrit word 'Tithi' meaning thereby the system to know the change of lunar behavior and names of days affected by the movement of moon viz. Ekam, Dooj, Teej, Chauth, Panchmi, Khat, Satvin, Ashtami, Naumi, Dasvin, Ekadashi, Dwadashi, Teidasi, Choras, Pooran mashi. Guru Nanak has made use of this poetic form in raga Bilawal. The guru composed twenty pauris on the basis of 15 thitis from Ekam to Amaavas. Thiti means season or date. Bhai Vir Singh has defined thiti as date based on the movement of moon. There are six seasons.

According to the change in the shape of moon 15 thitis have been imagined. Pooranmashi a full moon night and it is not seen at all on Amaavas. After Pooranmashi the moon starts decreasing. It is called Vadi or Krishna or dark half. After Amaavas, the moon keeps decreasing and increasing gradually. It is called Shudi or Shukla (brighter) half. People have linked umpteen superstitions like auspicious or ominous to these dates also. In the words of Rattan Singh Jaggi, "This composition has been made according to 15 lunar dates. Dispelling the

misconceptions of people regarding dates, many things have been expressed regarding meditation." This bani has been written in 20 stanzas. In thiti there are folk beliefs on one side and spiritual knowledge on the other. In this bani the guru has condemned the superstitious folk beliefs through negation and supported spiritual life. Underlining the duality wedged between Brahm and man the guru has preached liberation from this duality.

Barahmah: This is also a poetic form. There are two barahmahs in Gur Granth Sahib. The one composed by Guru Nanak Dev is in raga Tukhari and the other is composed in Maajh raga by Guru Arjan Dev. The first Master's bani has 17 bands- the first four bands of prelude, then 12 months and the last band or stanza is the essence of total achievement. The guru has used a combo in this composition. Chhant is dominated with the feeling of union while Barahmah is separation oriented. The entire bani is a combination of toiletry, separation and union.

Elaborating Barahmah Dr. Kuldeep Singh Dhir writes, "Barahmah is a poetic form which has been equally acknowledged in folk literature and patent literature. The Barahmah poetic form developed out of khat or ritu (season) poetic form." The guru uses the symbol of a separated woman for soul who is very crazy to see her husband i.e. God. In this composition the pangs of separation have been expressed very exquisitely in the backdrop of nature.

Pahra: This is Guru Nanak's composition in Sri raga. The word 'Pahar' is taken from the Sanskrit 'Prahar' which is of three hours i.e. one eighth of day and night together. Through this bani the guru has divided life into four Pahars- childhood, youth, waning life, old age- and described communion with God as the goal of life. This poetic form is based on time-consciousness. Human life has been equated with day and night. The first Pahar is childhood which man spends in playing, the second is youth when man indulges in all kinds of orgies. The third phase is that of twilight when the youth declines and gives way to the final phase of old age which is a stage of weakness. Therefore human life is valuable

and it must not be wasted.

**pahilai pahrai rain kai vanjaari-aa mitraa
hukam pa-i-aa garbhaas.**

.....

**doojai pahrai rain kai vanjaari-aa mitraa
visar ga-i-aa Dhi-aan.**

.....

**teejai pahrai rain kai vanjaari-aa mitraa
Dhan joban si-o chit.**

.....

**cha-uthai pahrai rain kai vanjaari-aa mitraa
laavee aa-i-aa khayt.
jaa jam pakarh chala-i-aa vanjaari-aa mitraa
kisai na mili-aa bhayt.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 75-76)

Human soul is just like a passenger trader in this world who has to spend one night (life) here. He has to trade profitably before going back to his real house. This composition lays stress on doing good deeds during life.

Alauhnis: This poetic form is used for expression of sorrow on the death of someone. The elegies sung on the occasion of death make its atmosphere. Guru Nanak Dev has linked it to the memory of God and given it expansion. Human body is perishable. Body as such knows no relationship. Therefore we must form a firm and faithful relation with God. To stop the worldly custom of lamenting over death the guru has urged man to accept death as will of God. Referring to the transience of world the guru has asked man to praise God. He has never supported grief or condolence. Rather he has preferred a death that may get man honor in the court of God.

Aarti: Aarti is a poetic form by which the object of worship is eulogized. Worship of God has been in vogue down the centuries. Piara Singh Padam writes that aarti is singing praises to the object of your worship while worshiping him. The Hindus have a tradition of rotating a platter with lighted lamps placed in it

seven times around the deity- four times near its feet, twice near the nave and once near the mouth. Also there is a provision of showering flower petals, blowing conches and burning incense at the time of aarti.

During his visit to Jagannathpuri, the famous Hindu temple, Guru Nanak Dev had preached that the man-made idols cannot be the master of the world i.e. Jagannath. He added that the supreme master of the universe is only one and an aarti is always in progress at cosmic level in recognition of His contribution to our life.

**gagan mai thaal rav chand deepak banay
taarikaa mandal janak motee.**

**Dhoop mal-aanlo pavan chavro karay
sagal banraa-ay foolant jotee. ||1||**

kaisee aartee ho-ay bhav khandnaa tayree aartee.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 663)

Aarti of four stanzas is based on raga Dhanasari. The guru dubbed the ritual of aarti as useless in comparison to the ever-going cosmic aarti in which sun and moon serve as lamps and the stars are like pearls in the heavenly platter. The entire vegetation is there to play the role of flowers. The sandalwood fragrance plays incense and air fans incense to spread the fragrance all around.

Kuchajji-Suchajji: In Guru Nanak Dev's bani two hymns entitles Suchajji and Kuchajji are available in raga Soohi. These hymns provide a glimpse of folk idiom. They relate to domestic atmosphere. An uncouth woman who does not know how to handle household chores properly is called Kuchajji. Peace at home requires etiquette as the first prerequisite. Guru Nanak has taken Kuchajji as a symbol of soul who remains away from spiritual life. This bani has 16 verses. Suchajji bani has 10 verses. In fact, both the terms are feminization of Manmukh and Gurmukh concepts. Both these compositions are imbued with folk idiom and give out spiritual meanings.

Chhant: Chhant is also a folk poetic form. Folk songs on women

are called chhant. Called chhand also it owes its origin to the Sanskrit word 'chhandas'. Chhand is free from the discipline of rhapsody. Chhand is a poetic form and is normally composed of four lines. It first, deals with the state of separation from the beloved one and then comes to meetin or union. Guru Nanak has composed 25 chhants. Most of these are laudatory and sung on happy occasions. In the guru's bani they are available in five, six and seven lines also e.g.

Tere banke loin dant risala
Sohne nakk tin lammre vala
Kanchan kaya suine ki dhala
Sovann dhala krishan mala japahu tusi saheliho
Jam dwar na hohu kharisikh sunsh maheliho
Hnas hansa bagbaga lahei mann ki jala
Banke loin dant risala
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 663)

Var: Var is famous and popular poetic form of Punjab. This form was chosen by the guru because of its public popularity for dissemination of his spiritual message. There are 22 vars in Guru Granth Sahib. Of these three belong to Guru Nanak viz. Malhar Di Var, Asa Di Var and Maajh Di Var. The traditional var focused on the gallantry or chivalry of the war heroes but Guru Nanak has replaced the frontal fight with the subtle conflict. Th pairs of gurmukh-manmukh, vice-virtue, good compant-bad company, noble deeds- ignoble deeds etc. have been given as substitutes to the armies, battalions, hordes of warriors etc. Var Malhar Di discusses power of God, communion with God, remembrance of Holy name, grace, egoism, superstitions, hypocrisy, and contemporary social, political and religious malpractice. Asa Di Var takes up effectively the topics like praise of God, adoration of the Master, desvription of nature, worthless religiois rituals, bad political system, casteism and place of woman etc. Apart from singing the praises to God Var Maajh Di concentrates on guru's admiration, manmukh, gurmukh and contemporary political system.

The very purport of Guru Nanak behind adopting these folk poetic forms was general welfare only. These folk forms turn

out to be potent source of communication. H delivered his spiritual message through Barahmah, Thiti, Chhant, Alauhni, Pahrās, Aarti etc.. The terms of routine temple aarti like thaal (platter), dhoop (incense), chavar (fan made of horse hair), phulant joti (vegetation), gandh (fragrance), chanan (light) etc. have been sublimated into spiritual meanings. Similarly, the usage of Suchajji and Kuchajji poetic forms symbolically was quite innovative on the part of Guru Nanak Dev. The guru has employed both the classical as well as folk poetic forms in his own chacteristic manner.

THE FIRST MASTER GURU NANAK DEV

Jasveer Singh
Bara Sidhpur, Nakodar (Jalandhar)

Guru Nanak Dev was the founder of Sikhism. Bhai Gurdas has written on his birth:

Satgur Nanak pargatia
Miti dhund jag chanan hoa
Jeo kar sooraj niklia
Taare chhapey andher paloa

Guru Nanak was not only an individual. He was a one-man institution where the thugs transformed into men of nobility trading the path of truth, the hungry got food in langar, the underprivileged got respect on arity and the unsheltered secured refuge. Guru Nanak is beacon light in the darkness of ignorance. He turned ordinary mortals into Sikhs and Sikhs into gurmukhs who then learnt Gurmukhi.

Guru Nanak Dev was born on 15 April 1469 at Rai Bhoi Ki Talwandi in the home of Baba Kalu and mother Tripta. Baba Kalu was a patwari by profession. Before him, Bibi Nanaki had taken birth in this very family. She was five years older than Nanak. She was married in 1477 to Jai Ram an official working in the provision store of Daulat Khan Lodhi.

The guru was sent to a teacher for education at the age of seven. At nine he logically condemned the ritual of janeu, the sacred thread. Then he started supervising the cultivation in the fields. At sixteen he was engaged to Batala resident Mool Chand's daughter Sulakhani and then married in 1487. In 1497 AD Siri Chand and in 1500 Lakhmi Das was born in his family. At the age of 34 he was given twenty rupees by his father and sent to Choohrkana. Those were the days of famine. He bought food for this amount and fed it to the hungry sadhus. Gurdwara Khara Sauda is built here these days to commemorate this event. In 1504 he came to Sultanpur at the invitation of Jai Ram. Mardana also accompanied him. He stayed in Sultanpur from 1505 to 1507.

Bhai Bhagirath has been a numberdar of Malsian Tehsil Shahkot and district Jalandhar. Earlier he was a worshipper of goddess Durga and became a Sikh in the company of Guru Nanak. For some time he used to take 'datun' for the guru. While bringing material for the wedding of a poor Brahmin's daughter the shopkeeper also became a Sikh and came to see the guru.

Guru Nanak set out on his odysseys in 1507 and covered eight Hindu pilgrimages up to 1515. AD. His second journey (1517-1518) covered the monasteries of Siddhas and Yogis in Uttrakhand. He met the yogis in Pasrur, Emnabad, Sialkot, Jammu Kashmir and Sumer-the mountain. He covered western countries for three years (1518-1521). As per Bhai Gurdas:

**Baba phir makke gaya
Neel bastar dhaare banvari**

From 1521 to 1539 he stayed at Kartarpur. He did farming. He gave the theory of work hard, remember God and share with others. He composed bani in 19 ragas. He wrote "Japuji Shib" (Without raga) which is considered to be the essence of Guru Granth Sahib. It has two shlokas, 38 pauris, 382 verses, 2090 words, 4977 swaras (vowels) and an equal number of vyanjans (consonants). Japuji Shib has the mechanism of abstract concepts. Guru Nanak was the first luminary to have used the poetic form of var for disseminating spiritual message. In other words, he wrote spiritual vars in raga Malhar, raga Maajh and raga Asa. He wrote Baramah in raga Tukhari. He also wrote Onkar Dakhni, Siddh Gosht and Babar Bani. Punjabi prose is supposed to be having its origin in the Janamsakhis of Guru Nanak.

Baba Lehna came under the patronage of the guru in 1532. On 2 September 1539 Bhai Lehna was elevated to the position of Guru Angad as this successor to the throne of spirituality.

Guru Nanak who gave proverbial aphorisms like Mann jeete jagg jeet, Nanak phikka boliye tan mann phikka hoi, Vidya veechari ta par upkari, So kyon manda aakhiye jit jamme rajaan passed away on 7 September 1539 at the age of 70 years 4 months and 19 days.

THE CONCEPT OF DE-ADDICTED SOCIETY IN GURU NANAK BANI

Jagmohan Singh

Human life is invaluable. This is in the hands of man to make it better or destroy it. Leo Tolstoy says that it is only man who himself harms his life. And, this is quite unnatural and anti-natural. Rabindra Nath Tagore is of the view that since man is not the maker of his body, he has no right to destroy it either. By being negligent towards our body we are being forgetful about our duties towards nature. Now the question is what can be expected of a man who cannot take care of his body? How can he contribute towards making a good society, a better world or better family? He can never be expected even to become a good son, good parent or good spouse. It is due to the increasing consumption of intoxicants that Punjab is producing the successors of Malik Bhagos, not Bhai Lalos. How can an addict be expected to have peace of mind or strong will power?

In such a scenario the preachings of Gur Nanak become more relevant for the world. The guru told the siddhas and yogis that the intoxicant they consumed would become ineffective very soon but "I will give you the real drug" he said:

gurb kar gi-aan Dhi-aan kar Dhaavai

kar karnee kas paa-ee-ai.

bhaathee bhavan paraym kaa pochaa

it ras ami-o chu-aa-ee-ai. ||1||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 663)

Meaning: Hey Yogi! Don't use gur (jaggery) for preparing wine. Rather use the gur of knowledge and add the flowers of mahua flowers and bark of labour. (The yogis disengaged from labour eat by begging at the doors of others. They mortify their body which had no benefit to the society). The guru said that "For preparing wine, don't light a fire outside. Instead, light your body and touch the pipe with the mo of love. Thus the nectar will start dripping in distillation. The intoxication of this drink will be ever

lasting. In simple straight words the intoxication of naam is everlasting. Once intoxicated, man gets linked to God in such a way that he attains oneness with Him in no time.

The above lines are very motivational. The essence of the teaching is that once the darkness of ignorance is dispelled, attention will turn to the right direction and meditation will get intensified. The toiler will be held in social esteem. One who takes care of body will not consume anything injurious to health. The men of affable nature are builders of an ideal and civilized society. We need to implement these thoughts of gurbani in practical life. Moving in society one comes to realize that the root cause of all problems in social set up is suffering. What is the origin of suffering? What are its causes? Such like questions start irritating us. If a definite answer is not found to these questions, the removal of suffering is not only difficult but impossible also. Suffering creates such a vacuum in our life which is difficult to be filled. The state of incapacity or frustration is what indeed we call suffering.

According to Pali-English dictionary, "Dukh" is a word of Indian tradition. There is no equivalent for it in English. The word "Sukh" is "ease" in English. Thus contrary to it "dukh" becomes "dis-ease". In English "disease" means illness which is different from "dukh" which is taken to mean "suffering".

In fact, it is suffering that brings depression which gives way to further different diseases. Intoxication or addiction is one of them.

In the middle of 15th century when society was reeling under all kinds of anarchy in every field Guru Nanak emerged on the scene as messiah. He witnessed the situation and started efforts on his part with the will of God. He made it very clear through his spiritual poetry that addiction created vice in human mind:

baabaa hor khaanaa khusee khu-aar.
jit khaaDhai tan peerhee-ai man meh chaleh vikaar. ||1|| rahaa-o.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 663)

It is the vices which drive man away from the real goal of life and result in the destruction of health.

In modern times youth is passing through a very crucial phase. It can be attributed to several reasons including the multiplication of nuclear families, children's living in isolation, dominance of capitalist tendency in society, decreasing mutual cohesion and separation of the aged from families. All these issues are interconnected. What kind of youth can be expected in such a situation? This is very unfortunate that Punjabi youth who was known for its character, self-esteem and dignity is now-a-days known as manmukh who is addicted to drugs. Except cannabis all other intoxicants are flowing in Punjab from other countries. Initially it was used for medicinal purposes later became a drug for addiction.

The addict loses his wits and does something which becomes a lifelong sore for him. The de-addiction centers are meant to raise the morale of addicts. Religious teaching and its implementation can be a great source of raising the morale of addicts.

Factors like age, gender, circumstances of marital life, employment, mental health and residence play an important role in attracting someone towards drugs. A nation cannot dream to be healthy and strong if its youth is mired in addiction. The population of Punjab is about 3 crore out of which 23 lakh people are dependent on opiates, 8.6 lakh use opium and 1.23 lakh depend on heroin. An RTI report reveals that liquor worth 35558 crore was consumed in Punjab in 2016. There are 16 liquor factories in Punjab. They produce 23,90,000 litre of liquor daily. About 33 crore bottles of liquors are gulped down the throat every year in Punjab. On the average, every week there is a death with liquor in Punjab. Two out of every ten people in Punjab are addicted to one or the other intoxicant. As per a research by Guru Nanak Dev University 70% of Punjabi youths are forced addicts.

Earlier the farm workers used to take drug at the time of work. Then gradually they would get used to it. The problem of addiction is very old which has eroded Punjab in a big way. During the guru period the intoxication was not in vogue at such a high scale. Mostly, traditional intoxicants like hemp, tobacco, opiates etc. were used in those days. Tobacco entered India in 17th. century. Guru Nanak Dev has said very clearly about these

intoxicants that we should abstain from everything that produce vice in the mind of man.

Guru Nanak has urged the people to abjure every kind of addiction and get addicted to the name of Akalpurkh. The third Guru Amar Das has said that after coming in human garb man remains away from his real purpose of life and gets stuck in vices. To get out of this hell of existence he will have to give up the vice altogether:

**maanas bhari-aa aani-aa maanas bhari-aa aa-ay.
jit peetai mat door ho-ay baral pavai vich aa-ay.
aapnaa paraa-i-aa na pachhaan-ee khasmahu Dhakay khaa-ay.
jit peetai khasam visrai dargeh milai sajaa-ay.
jhoothaa mad mool na peech-ee jay kaa paar vasaa-ay.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 554)**

In this stanza the third Master tells that an addict forfeits the ability to distinguish between mine and other. He has asked man in general to avoid any kind of addiction that may make him forget Akalpurkh and then liable to be punished in the ultimate court.

Guru Nanak Dev uses a metaphor of distillation in a composition notated in raga Bihagada. He asks man to suppose his body as a cauldron to prepare liquor, ego is the liquor and straying about in thirst is the junta of drunkards. Lust is the saucer for drinking and the Yama is serving it to man. Drinking this liquor fills the mind with vices. Under its influence man starts taking his misdeeds and tainted wealth as the real purpose of life:

**kaa-i-aa laahan aap mad majlas tarisnaa Dhaat.
mansaa katoree koorh bharee peelaa-ay jamkaal.
it mad peetai naankaa bahutay khatee-ah bikaar.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 553)**

Further making his point clear the guru says that the Divine knowledge should be taken as *gur* (jaggery), praise of God as *rotis* and His fear as meat. That will only be the true food as only name can be the support of life.

**gi-aan gurb saalaah manday bha-o maas aahaar.
naanak ih bhojan sach hai sach naam aaDhaar. ||2||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 553)**

Here the guru says that only the gyan i.e. knowledge of the Divine can enable man to distinguish between right and wrong.. When someone attains this kind of knowledge he keeps praising God every time absorbs the elixir of name and performs his duties.

The guru furthers says that if body is the cauldron, the recognition of Self immortalizing wine, the saucer should be full of name for doing away with all the vices. At that stage the mind of man turns towards the company of the wise. Such company equips man with a power that restrains mind from trading the path of nobility. Sitting in th noble company man attains deathlessness by remembrance of God's name only. And, a man of esteem keeps up his existence even after he is dead:

kaaNyaaN laahan aap mad amrit tis kee Dhaar.

satsangat si-o maylaap ho-ay liv katoree

amrit bharee pee pee kateh bikaar. ||3||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 553)

Gurbani characterizes an addict as 'patit' i.e. fallen. The addicts normally develop an abnormal taste. They start liking bitter and avoiding sweet eatables. Gurbani says:

amrit ka-uraa bikhi-aa meethee.

saakat kee biDh nainhu deethee.

koorh kapat ahaNkaar reejhaanaa.

naam sunat jan bichhoo-a dasaanaa. ||2||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 892)

It means to say that an addict becomes incorrigible and no wisdom or advice leaves any effect on him. He takes the intoxicant as nectar. The gurbani calls such a person manmukh- someone who has broken away from the righteous path. He cannot enter the gates of Akalpurkh's court. So he keeps wandering in the unending cycle of births and rebirths.

The guru says that the mind of man is like the cauldron

used for distillation of, wine. Metaphorically, lust is wine and one who drinks it is mind. The saucer is full of anger and ego is the one who serves. In such a sit-together mind gets berserk by doing the wine of lust. Guru Nanak says that we should make our noble deeds the cauldron, truth- the *gur* and true name- the wine. "Make your virtue- the naans, coolness of nature- the ghee and shame- the meat." He says. This diet becomes available as one meets the true guru face to face. Eating it removes all the vices:

kal kalvaalee kaam mad manoo-aa peevanhaar.

kroDh katoree mohi bharee peelaavaa ahaNkaar.

majlas koorhay lab kee pee pee ho-ay khu-aar.

karnee laahan sat gurm sach saraa kar saar.

gun manday kar seel ghi-o saram maas aahaar.

gurmukh paa-ee-ai naankaa khaaDhai jaahi bikaar. ||1||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 553)

The guru says, "Hey Waheguru ! I am a beggar at your threshold. I pine for your glimpse. Give me alms of your glimpse. Fear for you is cannabis for me. Keeping it has made me intoxicated and detached. Both my hands are a cup and my soul thirsts for your glimpse. Therefore, I seek only your glimpse at your door step:

bha-o tayraa bhaaNg khalrhee mayraa cheet.

mai dayvaanaa bha-i-aa ateet.

.....

ta-o darsan kee kara-o samaa-ay.

mai dar maagat bheekhi-aa paa-ay. ||1|| rahaa-o.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 553)

The gur tells what type of a trader of nectar is. He says: Man! Don't use gur (jaggery) for preparing wine. Rather use the gur of knowledge and add the flowers of mahua flowers and bark of labour. (The yogis disengaged from labour eat by begging at the doors of others. They mortify their body which had no benefit to the society). The guru said that "For preparing wine, don't light a fire outside. Instead, light your body and touch the pipe with the mop of love. Thus the nectar will start dripping in distillation. The intoxication of this drink will be ever lasting. In simple straight

words the intoxication of naam is everlasting. Once intoxicated, man gets linked to God in such a way that he attains oneness with Him in no time.

**gurm kar gi-aan Dhi-aan kar Dhaavai kar karnee kas paa-ee-ai.
bhaathee bhavan paraym kaa pochaa it ras ami-o chu-aa-ee-ai. ||1||
baabaa man matvaaro naam ras peevai sahj rang rach rahi-aa.
ahinis banee paraym liv laagee sabad anaahad gahi-aa. ||1|| rahaa-o.
pooraa saach pi-aalaa sehjay tiseh pee-aa-ay jaa ka-o nadar karay.
amrit kaa vaapaaree hovai ki-aa mad chhoochhai bhaa-o Dharay. ||2||
(Aasaa Mehlaa 1, page 360)**

Guru Nanak says in siri raga God Himself has given the ball of opium called attachment to Man. Consuming it has made him forgetful in a mood of torpor. He has forgotten even his death. The one who resists the temptation of opium and occupies the door step of God meets the Eternal God:

**amal galolaa koorh kaa ditaa dayvanhaar.
matee maran visaari-aa khusee keetee din chaar.
sach mili-aa tin sofee-aa raakhan ka-o darvaar. ||1||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 15)**

In Gurbani, opium has been likened to the worldly attachment and man has been warned against its consumption. Once fallen in its trap he feels no scruples in doing any kind of misdoings. Gurbani says that addictions drives man away from the actual goal of his life. Not only addiction but undue attachment also has the same impact. The main purpose of Guru Nanak was to make people aware of the maleffects of intoxication and healthy effects of remembering the name of God. In addition to it the gurus have issued edicts also against consuming the intoxicants like liquor. In the very light of Gurbani it has been directed in the Rehat Maryada that no Sikh should use intoxicants like cannabis, opium, tobacco, liquor etc. It is necessary to live life at a spiritual plane.

The epoch maker personages have the capacity to mould the circumstances of their times according to their intent and purpose. The emergence of Guru Nanak Dev on the scene in the social and religious domain was a great happening of medieval India. His advent was a sort of renaissance in the field of religion, ethics and philosophy.

The circumstances at that time had degenerated didmally and ignorance reigned supreme in every sphere of life. The ethical values had flown out of the window. Religio was reduced to performance of certain rites and rituals. Pantheism was quite in vogue. The life of renunciation was preferred to a householder's life. The Brahmin ruled the roost and treated himself as belonging to a 'holier than thou' attitude. According to Dr. Gokal Chand Narang, "Guru Nanak was the first spiritual personality who raised a voice against oppression and tyranny so overtly."

According to Prof. Parkash Singh, "Guru Nanak's coming on the scene heralds a new era. He infused a new life in the contemporary traditions and practices and gave a new direction to Punjabi literature and culture. Really, Gur Nanak was an epoch maker."

According to Dr. Kaaran Singh, "The main reason for this degradation was the absence of religion in the actual sense. It was the re-establishment of religion which could set the things right." Guru Nanak Dev had come to the world to establish the supremacy of religion and put the mankind on the right track.

Guru Nanak Dev was born in 1469. Historically his life is divided into three parts: 1469-1497, i.e. 28 years long domestic life, 1497-1521, the period of odysseys spread over 24 years and 1521-1539, life of the saint farmer at Kartarpur. His entire bani too, has been composed on this very basis. During the first segment he interpreted the prevalent social and religious mores in their right perspective. In the second part he made

commentaries on the popular beliefs, customs, rituals and religious faiths. The last part of his life is the best model of a pious man.

Ever since childhood he had the ability to distinguish right from wrong. He was sent to a pundit for primary education. On the basis of 35 characters of alphabet he wrote 35 chhants through which he expressed faith in one God and bowing before His will. At the age of ten he refused to wear the janeu made of cotton thread and struck at the futility of the ritual saying that the cotton thread is fragile and can be broken anytime. He stressed upon wearing the thread of discipline and self-restraint. It requires virtues like compassion, continence and contentment. The sacha sauda incident tells us that compassion towards the needy and suffering and taking maya as nothing great is the actual kernel of religion. We must be able to see God in the suffering humanity.

The religious approach towards household life prior to Guru Nanak held no importance at all. One of the four Hindu ashramas was sannyas. Naths and yogis would abandon their home and heart and escaped to the jungles and mountains. Guru Nanak condemned this escapism sternly. But the guru married in 1487 and produced two sons from this wedlock. Doing this he established the impotence of Grihasth Ashrama. He stressed that renunciation was no prerequisite of salvation. Describing life and death as natural phenomenon he pooh-poohed all superstitions linked with 'sootak' and 'paatak'. He also denounced superstitions linked with eating habits saying that all eatables are sacred.

During the second part of life he conducted four odysseys during which he toured Hindu pilgrimages, Jain and Buddhist monasteries, the monasteries of siddhas and yogis and the centers of Islam. He urged all of them to break out of the outer shell of religion. He conducted his first odyssey to the Hindu pilgrimages. By visiting the main pilgrimages he made the people gathered there familiar with the real meaning of religion. He rejected their futile beliefs, customs, convictions and superstitions. He criticized the customs like worship of ancestors and idol-worship.

There are so many food taboos in Hinduism. It is made to believe that eating meat is a sin. Guru Nanak Dev said that it is foolish to be judgmental on food. When every human being is made of flesh, where is the scope for hating non-vegetarian food? There are people who ostensibly hate non-vegetarian food but they have no compunctions in sucking the blood of people in their day to day life. The sacredness must be that of mind, word and deed not food.

The worship of ancestors is another great superstition in Hinduism. Hub of this activity is Hardwar where people offer water to the rising sun in reverence to their forbears. Guru Nanak negated the relevance of such things by offering water in the direction opposite to all. When this act of the guru succeeded in attracting the resentful attention of people he told them that it was all useless. What matters is serving your parents during their life time. Instead of pantheistic worship of a good variety of avatars Gur Nanak stressed on the worship of only one God. He described idol worship as wastage of time.

As mentioned earlier the element of religion in the real spirit of the term had vanished from Hinduism. They treated observance of certain rituals as religion. On the day of Baisakhi the Hindus used to go to Gaya for ritually offering *pind* (a ball of cooked rice/barley) to manes and light lamps in their memory. Gur Nanak Dev also reached Gaya. He was also asked by the thugs attired as priests to perform this ceremony but he refused saying that the remembrance of God's name is the only force that destroys all the sins of the past. And, it also serves as a lamp in the life of man.

Guru Nanak's second odyssey is known for his travels to Jain and Buddhist places of religious importance. There he cleared their misconceptions about violence and said that it is only God who gives life to all living beings and sustains them. He motivated them to live a life of reason and keep control over their senses. The guru said that rather than harping too much on non-violence they should lead a life of love and devotion.

After persuading the Jains, Guru Nanak went to the main centers of Buddhism. He made the otherwise atheist Buddhists in the authority of God. The Buddhists are of the belief that world is

a summation of elements only. But the guru told them that these elements are also functional under the command of God. He emphasized on the point that the success of human life lies in acknowledging His will. He advised them to leave the austerities of life and stressed on the purity of mind.

The third odyssey of Guru Nanak is called Sumer odyssey. Sumer was infested with yogis and siddhas. Under their influence the youngster would leave their home to join them. These people took their renunciation as religiosity. But Guru Nanak opposed this feeling vehemently and calling this world as the abode of God he established the superiority of household life. He said that salvation is possible while leading a normal householder's life. Also, that salvation should not be personal. It should benefit your fellow beings as well. This is the central theme and nucleus of Gurmat philosophy. During his dialogue with yogis he said that having long tassels, piercing earlobes for wearing ear rings and besmearing body with ash has nothing to do with quest for truth or spirituality. He stressed upon following a path of righteousness in normal life itself.

The fourth odyssey of Guru Nanak Dev was towards the west. He toured to several sacred places of Muslims. The Muslims treated their faith as higher than Hinduism. The guru told them that what matters is your performance in this life and without good deeds both Hindus and Muslims have to cry. By stretching his feet towards the sanctum sanctorum he persuaded them that God is omnipresent. He himself said *namaaz* in a mosque to show that prayer is prayer after all and place does not matter as God is one. He urged them to treat compassion as mosque, devotion as prayer mat, hard earned income as Holy Quraan, giving up vices as *sunnat* i.e. circumcision and sweet nature as Rozas. He also refuted their misconception that raga was sin. By his rendition of raga he convinced the Muslim leaders about the sublimity of raga. The guru urged all their pirs, faqirs etc. to abandon the path of miracles and praise only one God.

After four odysseys, Guru Nanak Dev returned to lead a normal life. During this part of his life, the guru felt lack of socialization among people. So he gave a concept of *sangat* i.e. religious congregation. This was a platform for individual and

social development at the same time. Almost entire literature authored during the third odyssey calls for a concerted social life having social and political justice.

From the above discussion we can have glimpse into the condition of different religions in the contemporary society. Hinduism had reached a dismal low due to its own weaknesses. Guru Nanak tried his best to make the religious leaders familiar with the real essence of religion and suggested ways to revive the defunct moral values. He emphasized the existence of one God in contrat to the worship of so many deities. Denouncing renunciation of home and hearth, the guru underlined the importance of living a normal household life. He widened the goal of salvation from individual to collective. He not only propagated but really helped the so-called lowcastes come at par with the self-supposed highcastes. Laying stress on the purgation of soul he saved the contemporary medieval society from disintegration. He made one thig very clear that religion is synonymous with a life of purity and it has nothing to do with rites, rituals, superstitions, penances etc. This kind of pure life is based on theism as *naam simran* i.e remembrance of Holy name of God is the only way to achieve it.

GURU NANAK: THE INEFFABLE PHENOMENON

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My pen shudders to write something about Guru Nanak Dev and I find myself landed in a fix. I fail to understand how to describe the undescribable. Which language will be suitable enough to praise the one who showed to the world the spectacle of the cosmic *aarti* in a beautiful metaphorical composition opening with "*Gagan meh thaal ravi chand Deepak...*" And, where to begin with? Should I start from the *Sacha Sauda* (true bargain) parable or the reverberation of the Divine repetition of "*Terah terah...*" (All belongs to you O Lord!)? Or else, should it start with the four odysseys meant to disseminate his message in all the four directions?

The mankind believes in a number of religious faiths and every religion has its own founder. The followers of all religions feel proud of their prophet and they keep panegyriizing him variously. It very rarely happens that some scholar or poet may eulogise the prophet of any other faith or become his follower. But vis-à-vis the spiritual stature of Guru Nanak the scholars of other religious faiths have also bowed their head before his spiritual effulgence. Allama Iqbal, the poet committed to Islamic *shrha* (Islamic law) proudly writes about his native land:

Nanak ne jis chaman mein vahdat ka geet gaaya
Mera watan wahi hai mera watan wahi hai

(I belong to a country where Nanak sang the songs of unity.)

This is also a historical fact that Rai Bular- also Muslim- was the first devotee of Guru Nanak. It was the eye of Rai Bular only which could discern the real Nanak in Nanak. What were the reasons that rather than Mata Tripta and Mehta Kalu- the parents- Rai Bular could recognize the Divine spark in the boy Nanak?

While attending a *deewan* (religious congregation) during my childhood, I had listened to an orator telling a story which sounds mythical but is pregnant with meaning. It explains

the power of the discerning eye. The story goes as under: "Guru Nanak's father Mehta Kalu and Rai Bular once sat in meditation. It pleased God who appeared before them. When asked what he wished, Mehta Kalu said that he wanted Him to take birth in his home.

"So be it," said God.

Now it was the turn of Rai Bular, who sat telling his rosary close by. He said,

"*Ya Allah!* My wish has already been expressed by Mehta Kalu. What else can I ask for?"

At this God is reported to have said, "O devotee! Although I will come to his home as son but he won't have the eyes to recognize me. Lo, I provide you that vision that will help you recognize me."

Having said this God vanished at once from the scene.

There is another legend about a Muslim devotee of Guru Nanak. When one day he was all praise for the Master, his disciples objected. They said that Islam recognized only seven skies and an equal number of nether worlds while Guru Nanak said there are lacs of skies and nether worlds.

As was the wont in ancient times, rather than replying to a query straightway, the faqirs or seers would justify their words by presenting some illustration, oral or visual. Similarly, the faqir asked his disciples standing in a mausoleum at a small distance how many houses they could see. As told, they cast a glance right and left and said they could see five to ten houses only. Now the faqir asked them to climb upstairs to the roof and see how many houses were visible. From the roof they could come out with fairly larger number of houses. Then the faqir told the disciples that even the smaller number was not wrong.

While writing, reading, singing or listening the saga of Guru Nanak's life, one feels manna dew dropping from the heavens in the environment all around. An incursion into the alleys of history from Nankana Sahib to Kartarpur Sahib provides a feeling of eternal peace to the parched hearts and makes one undergo a unique experience.

The first meeting of Bhai Lehna with Guru Nanak too, is very interesting. Like every year, Bhai Lehna was on his journey

to Mata Vaishno Devi along with his family. It so happened that separated from the pilgrims in the ambrosial hours, he chanced to listen the verses of Guru Nanak from Bhai Jodh who was taking a bath. Having enquired about the guru's address he set out for Kartarpur. Belonging to a well-off family Bhai Lehna, astride his mare with aristocratic elan, was heading towards his destination. As he reached near Kartarpur he asked a farmer coming out of the nearby fields with a sheaf of fodder on his head, about Guru Nanak's house. The farmer started walking ahead and asked the visitor to follow him.

Entering the village after taking a couple of turns right and left, the farmer reached the spacious courtyard of a house. He dropped the fodder load from his head and shaking the dust off his clothes he said to Bhai Lehna with folded hands,

"Welcome, you gentle visitor. This is Nanak, as the people around call me.....Say, of what service can I be to you?"

Hearing this, Bhai Lehna was swept off his feet. He at once dismounted from the mare and fell at the guru's feet. Wonderstruck, he was thinking,

"What is this I am seeing before my eyes? I had imagined Guru Nanak sitting on a throne-like seat in a well furnished room of some palatial dera, sporting a round white turban..... He will be found sitting in a posture of meditation with scents suffusing the environment..... He must be attired in a spotless white robe....His fingers working nimbly on rosary of golden beads..... He will be seen gesticulating to the disciples standing in attendance. Two or three of them will be found pressing his feet and legs.....The huge beds will be seen laid with velvety sheet....This was overall the image of Guru Nanak that I had conjured in my mind. But what is this?"

To see Bhai Lehna in a mood of repentance Guru Nanak took him in his embrace and said, "Bhai Lehna, don't feel so much about it.....You are the taker and I, the giver. The takers always come like this, riding the mare." The guru threw the implicit hint. This was the Lehna who later became Angad, the second guru in the line of succession.

Let us also pray before the Akalpurkh and be loyal to one threshold by leaving all other doors.

SCIENTIFIC TEMPER OF GURU NANAK BANI

**Daljit Kaur Daun
Mohali (Punjab)**

Guru Nanak Dev was a high caliber philosopher, reformer, religious and political thinker, economist, the connoisseur of nature, great litterateur, spiritualist and great astronomer of 15th-16th century. As mentioned in the verse "*Dhann lkhari Nanaka, jin naam likhaaya sach*" he is second to none as a writer. The testimony of his scientific understanding is enshrined in the gurbani. Scientific elements are available in Guru Nanak's masterpiece composition Japuji Sahib which is known to be the very basis of entire gurbani. Therefore scientific temperament pervades the whole of Guru Granth Sahib.

As per the above averment Guru Nanak writes in Japuji Sahib:

**kavan so vaylaa vakhat kavan kavan thit kavan vaar.
kavan se rutee maahu kavan jit ho-aa aakaar.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 4)

He questions as to what was the date, time, month or season when this Universe was created? Then he himself replies to this inquisition:

**vayl na paa-ee-aa pandtee je hovai laykh puraan.
vakhat na paa-i-o kaadee-aa je likhan laykh kuraan.
thit vaar naa jogee jaanai rut maahu naa ko-ee.**

jaa kartaa sirthee ka-o saajay aapay jaanai so-ee.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 4)

It shows that neither any pundit, nor qazi, nor yogi, has so far been able to tell anything about the creation of Universe.

There is divergence of views regarding the creator of Universe. According to Hinduism Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh are respectively the creator, sustainer and destroyer of Universe. The Christianity describes it as created by Adam and Eve. Guru Nanak has given this credit to Akalpurkh which has been expounded in the mool mantra of Guru Granth Sahib as under:

ik-ooNkaar sat naam
kartaa purakh nirbha-o nirvair
akaal moorat ajoonee saibhaN
gur parsaad.

Meaning: God is self created. He neither takes birth nor dies. Japuji Sahib is the prelude to Guru Granth Sahib. For millions of years there was total darkness. Nothing was visible in this darkness. Then His consciousness woke up and He created the Universe. The consciousness existed even before the world came into existence. All this happened due to the grace of Akalpurkh. The scientists call it big bang. Guru Granth Sahib mentions this stage as under:

*Arbad narbad dhundukara
Sunn samaadh lagaa dinda*

Guru Nanak Dev has elucidated it further:
**bhand jammee-ai bhand nimmee-ai bhand mangan vee-
aahu.**

.....
naanak bhandai baahraa ayko sachaa so-ay.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 473)

From the above lines it becomes clear that God is self-created. He is not born of woman. He is without fear or enmity with anyone. He is the Supreme Creator.

The European scientist Darwin attributed creation of Universe to evolution. According to him first of all aquatic life came into being on earth. It was followed by the generation of reptiles and then wild animals. Thereafter, the birds came in to being and then chimpanzee, the primeval ancestor of man came into existence. In England there is a museum called Darwin's Science Museum which showcases the anthropological evolution of man. They have proved it in laboratories also.

But Guru Nanak gave the thought of *Arbad narbad dhundukara* on the basis of no lab experiments. He also said that nobody can tell the exact time or date of the creation of this Universe. It means it is self made and is developing and will keep

developing. He had written it three centuries before Darwin. It was his scientific perspective that made him write:

**paataalaa paataal lakh aagaasaa aagaas.
orhak orhak bhaal thakay vayd kahan ik vaat.
sahas athaarah kahan kataybaa asuloo ik Dhaat.
laykhaa ho-ay ta likee-ai laykhai ho-ay vinaas.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 5)

In this pauri Guru Nanak Dev said that there are millions of skies upon skies and below ground there is not one but numerous nether worlds. About earth he says:

**Dhartee hor parai hor hor.
tis tay bhaar talai kavan jor.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 3)

He covered long distances on foot in plains as well as mountainous area. He stayed in caves, climbed the hills, crossed the rivers and wrote the following verse out of his experience:

kaytay ind chand soor kaytay kaytay mandal days.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 7)

There are countless moons, suns and constellations and countries. He adds:

koh karorhee chalat na ant.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 464)

The Univers, planets, moons and stars' constellations have covered a distance of millions of miles. They are still on the move.

Once Guru Nanak went to Jagannath temple and found the devotees performing aarti. They were rotating a platter with lighted lamps kept in it and incense burning. There he recited the following hymn to counter the futility of this micro aarti:

**gagan mai thaal rav chand deepak banay
taarika mandal janak motee.**

**Dhoop mal-aanlo pavan chavro karay
sagal banraa-ay foolant jotee. ||1||**

kaisee aartee ho-ay bhav khandnaa tayree aartee.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 663)

Here the guru has talked about an evergoing cosmic aarti. This aarti has bigger canvas that encompasses the world as a whole. A votary of welfare of all (*sarbat da bhala*) Guru Nanak felt elated at this mega performance of Nature before which the temple aarti pales into insignificance.

Another scientific point can be glimpsed from the following verse:

Panj tatt ka pootla Nanak mera naam

According to him this universe is made of five elements: Fire, water, air, sky and earth. In the verse cited above he has described himself as made of five elements. This has been acknowledged by science also:

sooraj ayko rut anayk. naanak kartay kay kaytay vays. ||2||2||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 12-13)

The sun is one but it produces so many seasons. If we take the world into account somewhere there is summer and somewhere it is winter, autumn or spring season. There are areas where it is raining and snow is falling. There are dry deserts also. All this variety is His own creation and He pervades all the guises. There are regions where half of the year it is day and another half is nocturnal. In comparison to eastern countries the day arises five to six hours late in the west. When it is winter in India Australia is hot with summer. This is all His own arrangement. Man has drawn some inference from this phenomenon after extensive research. But still there is much more that lies unexplored. The sky is black but it looks blue due to sunlight. There are so many other mysteries which elude the grasp of man. The guru writes:

**too daree-aa-o daanaa beenaa
mai machhulee kaisay ant lahaa.**
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 25)

And

There is an inexhaustible treasure of corals, pearls, oysters etc. Who can weigh or count them except God who is the maker of this universe? It is very difficult to demystify the mysteries of God.

Finally, we can conclude that although science has taken gigantic strides which have benefitted mankind in a big way. But Guru Nanak's bani preceded even the inventions of science. The elements of science are available aplenty in his bani. It is keeping a pace with the modern age.

GURDWARA BER SAHIB

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After Nankana Sahib (now in Pakistan), Sultanpur Lodhi in district Kapurthala is the only place where Guru Nanak Dev spent most of his time in life. It was her that he meditated for a long time and recited the mool mantra of gurbani. Also, he initiated from here the four odysseys of his life.

Sultanpur is one of the most ancient cities of the country. Supposed to have settled in the first century this town witnessed various vicissitudes of life from religious, political, literary and commercial perspective (s). From first to sixth century this town remained abuzz as a center of spirituality and Buddhism. At that time it was known as Sarvmapur. When Mehmud Ghaznavi, the Afghan marauder reached Sultanpur during his loot and plunder spree, he had burnt this town to cinders. In twelfth century Nawab Mohammad Ali Shah, the nephew of Naseeruddin Mohammad Shah was appointed the nawab of Punjab. Nawab Wali's son Sultan Khan embarked on the project of rebuilding the town with the result that from Sarvmaanpur it was rechristened as Sultanpur Lodhi. The beauty of this town situated on the banks of River Kali Vein attracted the rulers and it developed as a center of spirituality also. That is why it has been called Piranpuri (city of saints) also.

In 1475 AD Guru Nanak's sister Bibi Nanaki was married to Jai Ram of Sultanpur. In 1483, the guru's father sent him to Sultanpur at the bidding of Jai Ram for doing job. It was here that Nanak was married to Bibi Sulakhani in 1488. From this wedlock two sons Siri Chand (1494) and Lakhmi Chand (1497) were born. There are a number of gurdwaras in the name of Guru Nanak in this town which include Gurdwara (s) Hatt Sahib, Sant Ghat Sahib, Antaryaamta Sahib, Sehra Sahub, Guru Ka Bagh Sahib and Kothri Sahib.

Gurdwara Ber Sahib is situated on the bank of Kali Vein at the spot where Guru Nanak had meditated for 14 years, 9 months and 13 days in a basement. One of his disciples Baba Bhagirath

used to take *datun* for the guru daily from the nearby town Malsian. A *datun* twig pitched here by the Master took roots and blossomed into a full-fledged *ber* tree. It exists till today. That is why it is called Gurdwara Ber Sahib. According to Janamsakhis, the gur plunged into Kali Vein from this very spot and disappeared. He had re-appeared on the third day at a distance of about two kilometers in the direction opposite to the flow of the river. The point of re-appearance is commemorated in the form of Gurdwara Sant Ghat Sahib. It is said that Guru Nanak had recited the memorable words of enlightenment-***Na ko Hindu na Mussamaan-*** here only. He meant that all belong to one Akalpurkh only.

Gurdwara Ber Sahib is at a distance of one kilometer from the bus-stand of Sultanpur Lodhi towards the west. Before paying a visit here the devotees take a dip in the Holy Kali Vein. (Of late, due to the high pollution level of water a separate sarovar has been built for the bath of pilgrims. Now, Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal is trying his best to restore the pristine sanctity of the river by his cleanliness drive.) After the Holy dip the devotees visit the basement spot also where the guru is known to have meditated. Behind it is situated the historical *ber* tree for the visitors to see. A big keertan hall has also been built in the gurdwara. The langar keeps going for 24 round-the-clock and there is a sufficient provision of lodge for the visitors coming from far off places. All the important days concerned with the gurus are celebrated with great religious fervor in the gurdwarā.

PUNJABI THOUGHT AND GURU NANAK BANI

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Guru Nanak Dev was not only the founder of Sikhism. He also founded the philosophy of Punjabi culture. The footprints left by him on the sands of time are important not for Punjabi fraternity only but for the world as a whole. Traveling and mutual dialogue was his forte and an integral part of his life. The following lines underline the importance of mutual dialogue as conceived by him:

jab lag dunee-aa rahee-ai naanak

kichh sunee-ai kichh kahee-ai.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 661)

These two lines are a pointer to the development of knowledge. Going to someone and listening to him attentively before putting up your own point is the prerequisite of a successful dialogue. Guru Nanak spent a large part of his life in travel and dialogue. So the philosophy of his life is based on his practical experience. Guru Nanak's bani implies an eternity of perspective. As regards language and social concerns it is multi-contextual. The thinkers have been trying to comprehend it for the last about one and a quarter century. In Punjabi thought, Nanak bani has attracted special attention.

The point I want to bring home here is from what angles it has been tried to understand Guru Nanak's viewpoint. Although we get information at creative level from the sakhis, janamsakhis, annotations and the vars of Bhai Gurdas but in the sphere of Punjabi contemplation, for the first time Bawa Budh Singh shares information on Guru Nanak's life and compositions in his book "Hans Chog". Besides, Maula Bakhsh Kushta, Teja Singh, Puran Singh, Karam Singh, Ganda Singh, Mohan Singh Deewana etc. come out with the biographical details about the guru. Punjabi contemplation is as yet just one century and six years and dialogue on Guru Nanak's life and bani has also been going on since one hundred and six years only. Then comes Marxian

thought under which all the four thinkers of the first generations viz. Principal Sant Singh Sekhon, Prof. Kishan Singh, Dr. Nazm Hussain Sayyad and Attar Singh present their elaborate discourse on Guru Nanak's bani. Sekhon has a negatory attitude towards medieval literature but his "Asa Di Var" seems to be people-friendly and it is in revolutionary idiom. In his books "Inqilab Da Modhi Guru Nanak" and "Gurbani Da Sach" Prof. Kishan Singh says that Guru Nanak's bani prepares the ground for revolution. Prof. Kishan Singh smells Marxism in Nanak bani. Dr. Nazm Hussain Sayyad in his book "Farid-o-Nanak Nanak-o-Farid" studies some hymns from Guru Nanak's bani at a symbolic level. Similarly, Dr. Attar Singh seems to be studying Guru Nanak bai in modern and contemporary perspective. Then Dr. Haribhajan Singh, Dr. Tirlok Singh and Dr. Mahinder Kaur Gill also study the composition and texture of the guru's bani and deliberates on linguistic devices also. Apart from them scholars like Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi, Dr. Harkirat Singh, Dr. Jagbir Singh, Dr. Dharm Singh, Dr. Kesar Singh Kesar, Dr. Jodh Singh and Dr. Surjit Singh Bhatti also have made an indepth study of Guru Nanak Bani. But among these scholars, only Dr. Jagbir Singh has understood Guru Nanak's bani in the historical perspective of Indian or Punjabi philosophy. This study is base neither on commitment to a particular philosophy nor religious fanaticism.

Now on the occasion of 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak many a research magazines have brought out special issues to mark the occasion. Special issues on Guru Nanak bani have already been published by 'Punjabi Dunia', 'Khoj Patrika' and 'Khoj Patrika'. A venture of publishing a book having the contours of the though of more than one century is still awaited in Punjabi thought. European Punjabi Sath, Walsal (England) has responde in this direction for which I am very grateful to them.

Niranjan Singh Sathi
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A number of books have been written about Guru Nnak's life. Most of these are based on Jnamsakhis which were written much after the guru had left for his heavenly abode in 17th. or 18th. century. Without Janamsakhis it would not have been possible but the problem is that the incidents in the Master's life have been given in a haphazaed way without any chronological order. Similar is the case with his four odysseys. It draws the description of his journeys away from the range of reality.

Three scholars have made special attempts to set the biographical narration of Guru Nanak's journeys in a systematic order. In 1969, when 500th. birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev was being celebrated all over the world, Punjab University Chandigarh contributed towards the celebration by getting three meaningful books published. One of these was Dr. Surinder Singh Kohli's "Travels of Guru Nanak" (1969). To make this work authentic the scholar covered a journey of seven to eight thousand kilometers by travelling to the places journeyed by the guru.

The four odysseys being an important aspect of Guru Nanak's life, the task of researching them from a novel viewpoint was assigned by Punjabi University to Dr. Kirpal Singh, the renowned historian. To make an indepth study of the Janamsakhi literatue, Dr. Kirpal Singh travelled from Nanakmata (U.P.) to Sri Lanka. This effort fructified in the form his book "Janamsakhi Prampara" (1969).

Dr. Trilochan Singh's book "Jeewan Charitra Guru Nanak Dev" was published by Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Board in 1972. Dr. Trilochan Singh spent 15 years on the completion of this task.

This essay is an attempt to underline the most risky visit of the guru to Mecca on the basis of the above cited three books.

After his travels to North, East and South Guru Nanak had settled comfortably at Sultanpur with his sister Bibi Nanaki. One day Mardana beseeched the Master to take him to Mecca which had been his long cherished desire. Sant Das Chhibber writes in

his "Janamsakhi Guru Nnak Shah Ki":

***Mardaane kar jod ke gur pe ki ardas
Makka main dekha chahomo mann adhik pyas***

Guru Nanak already had a desire to visit Mecca. After covering the pilgrimages of Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Naths and Yogis, visit to Muslim places of worship was pending. So he readily agreed to set out for Arab-Iraq land. One day traversing Sindh land, the guru said to Mardana, "Ok, let's go to Makka, my friend." Bhai Sarup Chand Bhalla writes in his work "Mehma Parkash" (1776 AD):

***Sindh dharti te satguru gaye
Mardana ko bachan im kahe
Tuhi hajj karavo Makke meet
Hoi parsann tumhara cheet***

All the writers are unanimous over the point that Guru Nanak started his journey to the west from Sultan. Also there is unanimity on Bhai Gurdas' saying that the guru was attired in blue robes while en route to Mecca. At that time he had a thick staff in his hand and the Holy book in his underarm. Also, he had the prayer mat and urn often taken along by the namaaz-sayers:

***Baba phir Makke gaya neel bastra dhaare banwari
Asa hath kitab kachh kooja bang musalla dhari
(Bhai Gurdas)***

These three writers disagree on the route Gur Nanak took from Sultanpur to reach Mecca. According to Dr. Kohli Guru Nanak boarded the ship from Surat port of Gujrat while Trilochan Singh says he boarded from Porbandar. But Dr. Kirpal Singh's account seems more realistic.

According to Dr. Kirpal Singh Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana reached Pakpatan by boat from Sultanpur in River Satluj. Pak Patan has the privilege of having the seat of Sheikh Farid. At that time Sheikh Ibrahim (also called Sheikh Brahm). Having spent some days with him they set out for Multan. In Multan he stayed for some days with Sheikh Bahauddin occupying the seat of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria. From Multan, the guru rached Uch where the Pir held a very high position. Here

Sheikh Haji Abdul Bukhari was preparing to go to Mecca. After some days Sheikh Bahauddin also came from Multan to Uch Sharif. Now they were four to travel to Mecca. They reached Sakhar from Uch by boat in River Sindh. From Sakhar both the sufi pirs set out for Mecca via Shikarpur and Baluchistan and crossing Bolan pass and Guru Nanak and Mardana reached Gujrat city Lakhpat Nagar first through River Sindh and then River Kori. From Lakhpat Nagar the guru and Mardana reached Sonmiani port via Kuriani and Koteswar. Sonmiani was a famous port 50 kilometers away Karachi (which had not settled yet) towards the west. Hinglaj Goddess temple is not very far from Sonmiani. The sea journey of the guru and Bhai Mardana started from Sonmiani port by ship.

From Sonmiani the ship reached Kalhat port on the coast of Muskat via Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf. The next stay after Kalhat was Adan. According to Dr. Kohli it was in the year 1517. The guru and Bhai Mardana spent some time near the fort built near hillock about half a kilometer outside the city Adan. Here a golden-domed gurdwara is built to perpetuate the memory of those moments. From Adan the ship reached Alaswad, the then famous port of Hajis about twelve kilometers this side of Jeddah, the well-known port. (Dr. Kirpal Singh writes with reference to Encyclopaedia Britannica that in the beginning of 16th century the ports of Muskat and Jeddah did not exist but Ibn-e-Batuta repeatedly mentions about Jeddah port in 1330 in his travelogue).

As per Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha's "Mahankosh", Mecca is 60 to 70 miles away from Jeddah (or Alaswad) while distance from Karach to Jeddah is 2180 miles. When coming by land Sheikh Bahauddin Bukhari, the Sheikh of Multan and Uch Sharif's Haji Bukhari Sahib reached Mecca, they were astonished to see Guru Nanak already reached there. The Janamsakhis present this simple incident as a miracle. But according to Dr. Ganda Singh the land route was very difficult and fraught with risk. The sea route was convenient, unhindered and comparatively less time consuming. Therefore, it was quite natural for Guru Nanak to reach earlier than the Sufi faqirs. (Papers on Guru Nanak, Punjab History Conference proceedings, 1969).

Normally, the guru would go to pilgrimages on some

specific occasion or fair so that he could have a good audience for delivering his revolutionary message. He chose to visit Kurukshetra on the day of solar eclipse and Hardwar on Baisakhi. For Mecca, he preferred the Haj occasion thronged by millions of musalmaans from all over the world for performing Haj.

Having reached Mecca, the guru stayed for a night in a mosque outside the periphery of the Holy city. Some visitors from India were already putting up there. An Indian musalmaan Mullan Jeewn was servant here. He would sweep the mosque in the morning and awaken the guests. When he came to sweep clean the mosque and awaken the guests in the morning today he found Guru Nanak Dev lying with his feet stretched in the direction of Qaaba Sharif. It infuriated him. He kicked the 'blasphemous' guru for the sacrilege and said,

"Oi, who are you lying with your legs stretched towards the abode of Khuda?"

Hearing him shout some other hajis and faqirs also gathered there. An unruffled Guru Nanak opened his eyes and said, "What makes you so much offended brother? You turn my feet towards wherever you feel Khuda is not there." The angry sweeper turned the guru's legs towards the other side. But all the people gathered there were dumbfounded to see that Qaaba too had rotated likewise in the same direction.

Ja sutta baba raat nu vall mehrabe pai pasaari

Jeewan mari latt dh kehra sutta kufr kufari

(Bhai Gurdas)

It would be useless to debate whether Qaaba had actually rotated or not as it will tantamount to defy the laws of nature. The inlaid message of the parable is that the guru wanted to convey to them the message that God is one. It stands for the concept of non-duality in Islam. Even otherwise there is a legend of Qaaba shifting from its place. It is said that once Hazrat Ibrahim went to Mecca only to find that Mecca Muazzama was not there. When asked he was told that Qaaba Sharif was away for welcoming an old and decrepit woman. The sakhi of the Mecca rotating to other side might have been influenced by this legend.

After this incident a large number of Hajis and faqirs gathered around the guru and showered a volley of questions on

him. The guru replied to them with great cool. The questioner would put the question like a zealot but was lulled to peace with the answer. This question-answer session included the curious seekers like the famous Qazi Rukandin of Mecca, Jalaludin Baghdadi, Imam Qarimdin, Mullan Jeewn, Makhdoom Bahauddin of Multan (who accompanied the guru from Punjab), Haji Abdul Bukhari (Uch Sharif) and some more Hajis and Qazis from Mecca. The topics of inquisition were: Is Khuda only one for the mankind as a whole? Who is the prophet of Khuda? How can one meet Khuda? How many slies and nether worlds are there? What are the requisites of religion (*imaan*)? What is meant by life, death, vice- virtue, truth-falsehood, charity-sin, who is better: Hindu or Musalmaan? Etc. Dr. Trilochan Singh and Dr. Kirpal Singh have thrown ample light on such topics in their books. This discussion has been recorded with sufficient detail in a book written in the second half of 17th century under the title "Makee Madine Di Gosht".

All the Janamsakhis are one on the point that Guru Nanak and Mardana stayed for full one year in Mecca. During this period the topics like Universe (*Qainaat*), human life, the post-death existence and issues over Hindu-Muslim faiths were taken up for discussion. Every such discussion added to the stature of the Master in public eye.

According to Giani Gian Singh, one day Mardana asked the guru whether they had come to Mecca for permanent settlement. The guru then shifted to Madina- about 300 kos away from Mecca with his acoompanists. Prophet Mohammed, the founder of Islam had stayed for several years in Madina. In 632 AD he passed away here only. His tomb is known as 'hujra'. Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana visited the hujra and spent a lot of time there. The four *Imams* of Madina Gausdin Rumi, Kutabdin, jamaldin, Kamaldin, Imam Zafar and Imam Safi had a long discussion with the guru. There are two routes for going to Madina from Mecca. The route of commercial caravans is via Damascus, the capital of Iraq (820 miles). The other one for the Hajis- via Faiz- is comparatively shorter. In Baghdad there is a monument of Guru Nanak near the Railway Station. Here an inscription in the wall proves the guru's visit to this place. Dr. Trilochan Singh writes, "In Baghdad, everybody was fast asleep when the guru entered the

mosque and mounting a rostrum gave loud call on the pattern of mullan's baang:

*Gurbar akaal, sat sri akaal
Chit charan naam, ghar ghar parnaam
Prabhu kirpal, jo sarb jeewal*

(Janamsakhi Bhai Mani Singh)

It created an eerie sensation in the city. Bhai Gurdas writes:

*Ditti bang namaaz kar sunn sunn samaadh hoa jahana
Sunn munn nagri bhayi, dekh pir bhaya hairana.*

This theatrical tactic of the guru attracted a throng of pirs, faqirs and ulemas of Baghdad. The question-answer session started again. In Baghdad there is a seven-minareted mosque built on the grave of Shah Maheuddin Abdul Qadir Geelani, the founder of Qadri Sufi sect. The chief of this mosque is called pir dastgir. He came to the guru along with his sons and other pirs and maulavis. Guru Nanak's statement about countless skies and nether worlds triggered a prolonged controversy as Islam puts the number at seven only. The guru's views convinced Pir Dastgir and his son. A famous pir of Baghdad Behlol Dana was also listening to Guru Nanak's views. He did not ask anything but listened to the Master's words with rapt attention as if entranced. He lived on for sixty years after the guru returned to Punjab. He spent rest of his life sitting near this place. And, he was buried there after he passed away.

After Baghdad the guru started his return journey to India. Along with Mardana Guru Nanak entered Afghanistan via Tabrez and Mash-had. Through Kandhar he reached Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. Until recent years, there used to be a gurdwara in the Jubba Chowk of Kabul in memory of Guru Nanak. Because of its having come in the way of road it was razed. Further passing through Jalalabad, Sultanpur, Kuram valley and Khaibar pass they reached Pishaur. Across Pishaur there starts the area of Punjab. Journeying slowly and steadily, the guru reached Sultanpur, the new town settled by him on the banks of river Ravi. It put an end to the fourth and last odyssey of the great Master. According to an estimate he covered a distance of about 11000 kilometers during this odyssey. Dr. Hari Ram Gupta puts the period of this odyssey between 1517 to 1521.

As regards Guru Nanak Dev's journey to western countries Bhai Gurdas says:
Gar Baghdad nivai ke Makka Madina sabhe nivaya

This is something very interesting that the effect of this visit of the guru is still there in Arab and Iraq. The pirs of Mecca were so much impressed with the guru that they demanded some souvenir from him. At this Guru Nanak gifted them his wooden shoes:

Dhari nishani kaus di Makke andar pooj karai
(Bhai Gurdas)

According to Dr. Kirpal Singh these shoes were brought by the Uch Sharif pir Abdul Bukhari. Now these are lying safe in the *Toshakhana* i.e. treasure house. (Jnamsakhi Parampara, P 128)

The greatest impact of Guru Nanak's Mecca visit can be seen in Al sabia or Sabian people of Iraq call themselves votaries of Guru Nanak. They keep beards and unshorn hair on head like Sikhs and hang a picture of the guru in around their necks. They are not treated as Muslims by the Iraqis. (Dr. Kirpal Singh, Janamsakhi Parampara, P132-33). Dr. Ganda Singh also ratifies this fact. Sheikh Jalal-Al-Hanafi told Dr. Sangat Singh that three proverbs are very popular in the Baghdadi folk lore:

1. *Anta Baba Nanak* (Are you Baba Nanak?)

2. *Aa' Baba Nanak* (As if he is Nanak)

3. *Ana moo* (I am not Nanak)

They use these proverbs while discussing about the planets, universe etc. as they knew that only Nanak had the mastery over this subject. (Dr. Sangat Singh, Sikhs in History, P.17)

Nobody can remain insulated against the impact of Guru Nana's personality because of his universal approach. No other founder of any religion traveled that far. The guru had a very pragmatic kind of approach towards life. We must make our life meaningful by taking a spark of his wisdom from him.

Jaswinder Singh 'Rupal'
Shaheed Jasdev Singh Nagar (Ludhiana)

In the course of human history a path breaker leader emerges to create ripples of change in the stagnant waters. It gives an altogether new direction to the society which is no less than a revolution. Guru Nanak's arrival on the scene in the late fifteenth century also infused a new life in people afflicted with economic exploitation, social disparities and political oppression.

Here we shall try to understand Nanak not as an individual but through his ideology. Moreover, apart from being a spiritual leader, he was a great litterateur also. A writer can best be judges through the prism of his literature as creation is the reflection of its creator only. As a matter of fact, both the phenomena go parallel to each other because his bani or sublime poetry too was a product of the circumstances society was going through at that time.

What we call revolution is rebellion or revolt against the system, challenging the established values, convictions and authority. It implies not only rejecting them at verbal level but acting against them at practical level also. It is the fundamental duty of a rebel to raise the voice of truth irrespective of the norms or expectations of family, society, law of the land or state in general and make people follow him. We shall try to understand Guru Nanak from these very parameters.

In childhood, the child Nanak is seen pressing upon his viewpoint that Akalpurkh or God is one and sticking at ONE only.

sahib mayraa ayko hai.
ayko hai bhaa-ee ayko hai. ||1|| rahaa-o.
(Aasaa Mehlaa 1, page 350)

In adolescence we find Nanak lost in love of God and quite detached from the mundane affairs. He would love to go and sit in the cremation ground or enjoy the company of mendicants, faqirs and this tendency kept gaining intensity day by day.

Father Mehta Kalu organizes initiation function at home but the rebel in Nanak refuses to wear the sacred thread and comes out with the metaphorical interpretation of the *janeu* or sacred thread:

**da-i-aa kapaah santokh soot jat gandhee sat vat.
ayhu janay-oo jee-a kaa ha-ee ta paaday ghat.
naa ayhu tutai naa mal lagai naa ayhu jalai na jaa-ay.
Dhan so maanas naankaa jo gal chalay paa-ay.**

(Salok Mehlāa 1, page 471)

During those days, this was no small thing to oppose a tradition which had been in vogue for centuries. It was very gutsy to refuse wearing *janeu* in the presence of the guests including the reputed people of the area, the family and relatives. The reason overrides the tradition in such cases.

The father observed that Nanak had no interest in worldly affairs yet he tried to involve him in business by giving him twenty rupees. But Nanak was Nanak after all. He spends the entire amount on feeding the hungry sadhus and takes it as the best deal (*sacha sauda*). He is all for this deal in his bani:

**sun saasat sa-udaagree sat ghorhay lai chal.
kharach bann chang-aa-ee-aa mat man jaaneh kal.
nirankaar kai days jaahi taa sukh laheh mahal. ||3||**

(Sorath Mehlāa 1 Ghar 1, page 595)

He enters the river Vein and comes out with his message of global brotherhood saying "*Na ko Hindu na musalmaan*". He feels the heat of humanity burning in the infernal fire and sets out on his odysseys to improve upon the situation.

Guru Nanak was so much committed to the truth ingrained in him that he endeavoured to make it manifest at every available opportunity. In Hardwar, he brings home his point to the devotees in a very dramatic manner by offering water in the other direction. Offering water to his fields in Kartarpur is dignifying the labour by logically countering the superstition. The courage to resist the established priesthood comes only with knowledge.

Refraining from participation in aarti at Jagannathpuri

temple and giving it a cosmic interpretation falls to the share of the men of fortitude only:

**gagan mai thaal rav chand deepak banay
taarikaa mandal janak motee.**

**Dhoop mal-aanlo pavan chavro karay
sagal banraa-ay foolant jotee. ||1||**

(Raag Dhanaasree Mehlā 1, page 13)

The mighty have always been held in high esteem and the poor and underprivileged ignored in every age. The have-not toiling class is always kept at an arm's length. But Guru Nanak practically showed that no men are high or low particularly on caste basis. He kept Mardana who belonged to a poor low caste along with him throughout his odysseys. So much so that he sang his celestial compositions on Mardana's rabab and honoured him by making some shlokas a part of his bani in his name.

**kal kalvaalee kaam mad manoo-aa peevanhaar.
kroDh katoree mohi bharee peelaavaa ahaNkaar.**

.....

**gurmukh paa-ee-ai naankaa khaaDhai jaahi bikaar. ||1||
(Salok Mardaanaa 1, page 553)**

During his odysseys Guru Nanak gathered the bani of bhagats belonging to different castes and religious faiths and handed it over to Guru Angad in the form of book.

He not only preached against caste institution by saying "jaanhu jot na poochhahu jaatee aagai jaat na hay. ||1|| rahaa-o.(aasaa mehlā 1, page 349)" but reiterated his resolve to stand by the so-called low castes:

**neechaa andar neech jaat neechee hoo at neech.
naanak tin kai sang saath vadi-aa si-o ki-aa rees.
jithai neech samaalee-an tithai nadar tayree bakhsees. ||4||3||
(Sireeraag Mehlā 1, page 15)**

This is what becomes evident from Malik Bhago- Bhai Lalo episode also. Only a fearless person can reject the sumptuous meal of an aristocrat and accept the hospitality of a

poor carpenter to tell the former that his luxury comes from the exploitation of the poor. This attitude has in it the seeds of revolution against the haves. These seeds can be seen sprouting and flourishing in the lives of the subsequent gurus and other ideal Sikhs.

**hak paraa-i-aa naankaa us soo-ar us gaa-ay.
gur peer haamaa taa bharay jaa murdaar na khaa-ay.
galee bhisat na jaa-ee-ai chhutai sach kamaa-ay.
maaran paahi haraam meh ho-ay halaal na jaa-ay.
naanak galee koorhee-ee koorho palai paa-ay. ||2||**
(Mehlai 1, page 141)

Sajjan was a thug masquerading as philanthrop looted and then murdered the visitors who came to stay in his inn. Guru Nanak transformed him with the barbs of his bani in such a way that the thug became his devotee and started leading a life of righteousness.

***Ujjal kaiha chilkana ghotim kalri mas
Dhotia jooth na utre je sau dhova tis
Sajjan sei naal main chaldian nal chalann
Jithe lekha mangiye tithe khare disann***
(Soohi Mahla 1, Ghar 3, P. 129)

The gur has written very decisively about Akalpurkh, naam and shabd guru. He made so incisive attacks with the barbs of his bani that the rulers too were at a loss of words.

The Guru's Political Views

While Guru Nnak was staying at Saidpur, Babar, the Mughal king invaded India. The people at that time were suffering from superstitions spread by the Brahmins. The pundits prophesied that their mantras would blind the forces of Babar. But the Brahmins kept chanting the mantras and the mughal armies kept looting gold and diamonds from Somnath temple.

Babar's troops perpetrated great persecution on the

innocent people. How could Guru Nanak keep silent? His "Babarbarani" gives a very vivid description of the tyrant king's invasion. He has a grouse against the priest class which relied on mantras amidst the spree of loot and arson.

khuraasaan khasmaanaa kee-aa hindusataan daraa-i-aa.

aapai dos na day-ee kartaa jam kar mugal charhaa-i-aa.

aytee maar pa-ee karlaanay taiN kee darad na aa-i-aa. ||1||
(Aasaa Mehlāa 1, page 360)

And

kotee hoo peer varaj rahaa-ay jaa meer suni-aa Dhaa-i-aa.

thaan mukaam jalay bij mandar muchh muchh ku-ir rulaa-i-aa.

ko-ee mugal na ho-aa anDhaa kinai na parchaa laa-i-aa. ||4||

(Aasaa Mehlāa 1, page 417-18)

Since Babar's army needed labourers, they forced so many people from the city into labour. The victims of this forced labour included Guru Nanak also. Exhibiting exemplary dauntlessness the guru called Babar a tyrant on his face. He was thrown behind the bars for this 'crime'. In the prison also, he won the hearts of people by his sweet conduct. When a realization that by putting a divine being like Nanak in the jail he had committed a sin, Babar decided to release him, he demanded the release of all the captives.

Babarbarani challenges the tyrannical rule of Babar in the strongest words:

raajay seeh mukdam kutay.

jaa-ay jagaa-iniH baithay sutay.

(Mehlāa 1, page 1288)

kal ho-ee kutay muhee khaaj ho-aa murdaar.

koorh bol bol bha-ukanaa chookaa Dharam beechaar.

jin jeevandi-aa pat nahee mu-i-aa mandee so-ay.

likhi-aa hovai naankaa kartaa karay so ho-ay. ||1||

(Salok Mehlāa 1, page 1242)

kal kaatee raajay kaasaa-ee Dharam pankh kar udri-aa.

koorh amaavas sach chandarmaa deesai naahee kah charhi-aa.

(Salok Mehlāa 1, page 145)

Pleased with the guru, Babar not only waived off tax but promised also to keep the land of Saidpur peaceful. Saidpur was renamed Aman Abaad (Emnabad) later.

The bani of Guru Nanak gives a clarion call to the people to raise their voice against exploitation and for introspection as well.

**so jeevi-aa jis man vasi-aa so-ay.
naanak avar na jeevai ko-ay.
jay jeevai pat lathee jaa-ay.
sabh haraam jaytaa kichh khaa-ay.**

(Mehlaa 1 Salok, page 142)

Very often the ruling class tries to implement its own language. Under fear the people at that time had started speaking the language of rulers. The guru writes:

**koojaa baaNg nivaaj muslaa neel roop banvaaree.
ghar ghar mee-aa sabhnaaN jee-aaN bolee avar tumaaree. ||6||
(Basant Hindol Mehlaa 1 Ghar 2, page 1191)**

And

**khataree-aa ta Dharam chhodi-aa malaychh bhaakhi-aa gahee.
sarisat sabh ik varan ho-ee Dharam kee gat rahee. ||3||
(Dhanaasree Mehlaa 1 Ghar 3, page 663)**

Guru Nanak himself said goodbye to Sanskrit known as the language of gods (Devbani) and preferred to write in his own language.

The guru's dialogue with yogis, siddhas, pundits, ulemas, qazis etc. provides a glimpse into his fearlessness and a firm grip on his principles.

**kaadee koorh bol mal khaa-ay.
baraahman naavai jee-aa ghaa-ay.
ogee jugat na jaanai anDh.
teenay ojaarahay kaa bandh. ||2||
(Dhanaasree Mehlaa 1, page 662)**

The dialogue with siddhas is enshrined under the title of

Sidh Gosht in Guru Granth Sahib wherein questions from the Siddhas and answers by the guru make for a very undaunted and forceful interaction. (Why is the modern Sikh ever ready to pounce upon the throat of the dissident? Simply, because he is not equipped with knowledge and lacks the faculty of reasoning.) Guru Nanak does not accept any religion, worship, meditation etc. which is of no use to society. He strongly condemned the siddhas for escaping to the mountain caverns for meditation. Bhai Gurdas writes in his var that as the siddhas asked him about the situation of the world below he replied:

***Baabe aakhya nath ji sach chanderma koor andhara
Paap girasi pirthami dhaul khara dhir heth pukara
Sidh chhap baithe parbati, kaun jagatri kau par utara
Jogi gyan vihhonia nisidin ang lagaayan chhara***
(Bhai Gurdas Var 1, Pauri 29)

When the siddhas asked him to show some miracle the guru replied in Bhai Gurdas' words:

***Baba bole nath ji, asan te vekhan jogi vastu na kaayi
Gur sangat bani bina, dooji ot nahi hah raayi***
(Bhai Gurdas Var 1, Pauri 242)

Booth these forces have to be taken into consideration. Sangat is the symbol of people's power which has the potential to bring about revolution through knowledge of gurbani.

The implementation of guru's ideology of people-friendly egalitarian society provides him strength to challenge the monster called Kauda. He represents the capitalists of today who have established control on the means of production. The guru says that he cannot be the sole owner of the natural resources and therefore none can be discriminated against in the utilization of these sources.

In Mecca his dramatic style of conveying the purported message attracts our attention. It could be possible due to his having depended on the grace of only one i.e. Akalpurkh.

***sarab jot tayree pasar rahee.
jah jah daykhaa tah narharee. ||1||***

(Raamkalee Mehlaa 1, page 876)

If we start taking examples from the life of Guru Nanak Dev, time and space will fall short. The guru taught man to love the only One i.e. Akalpurkh and sacrifice even life, if need be, for that love.

ja-o ta-o paraym khaylan kaa chaa-o.

sir Dhar talee galee mayree aa-o.

it maarag pair Dhareejai.

sir deejai kaan na keejai. ||20||

(Salok VaaraaN tay VaDheek, Mehlaa 1, page 1412)

We have to live a life of fearlessness and without ill-will towards anyone. Our life should be marked by working hard, remembrance of God, treating the whole mankind as one, seeing the Creator in His creation and embracing the whole world beyond the differences of caste, creed and race. Guru Nanak brushed aside all the rites and rituals, superstitions and ceremonies, pilgrimages, shradh, fasts, untouchability and ochre robes and favoured a poised life under the will of God.

Here, it would be pertinent to give some references from gurbani which advocate a life of humility and dignity:

galeeN asee changee-aa aachaaree buree-aah.

manhu kusuDhaa kaalee-aa baahar chitvee-aah.

(Mehlaa 1, page 85)

jay rat lagai kaprhai jaamaa ho-ay paleet.

jo rat peeveh maansaa tin ki-o nirmal cheet.

(Salok Mehlaa 1, page 140)

ha-umai boojhai taa dar soojhai.

gi-aan vihoonaa kath kath loojhai.

(Salok Mehlaa 1, page 466)

khasam visaareh tay kamjaat.

naanak naavai baajh sanaat. ||4||3||

(Aasaa Mehlaa 1, page 10)

kookar sookar kahee-ahi koorhi-aaraa.

bha-uk mareh bha-o bha-o bha-o haaraa.

man tan jhoothay koorh kamaaveh durmat dargeh haaraa hay. ||15||
(Maaroo Mehlaa 1, page 129)

kal meh raam naam saar.

akhee ta meeteh naak pakrheh thagan ka-o sansaar. ||1|| rahaa-o.
(Dhanaasree Mehlaa 1 Ghar 3, page 662)

maas maas kar moorakh jhagrhay gi-aan Dhi-aan nahee jaanai.
ka-un maas ka-un saag kahaavai kis meh paap samaanay.
(Mehlaa 1, page 1289)

Therefore we see that it would not be right to restrict Guru Nanak Dev to naam or meditation. He not only witnessed the social, individual, political, and religious degradation of the contemporary society but raised a voice against it as well. Each and every word of his bani hints at some imminent revolution which starting from individual promises to transform the world altogether in the end. However, the bani in general and Asa Di Var, Siddh Gosht, Maajh Ki Var and Babar bani in particular must be understood and complied with by us. If today we feel complacent with paying obeisance at the gurdwara, covering the scripture with expensive silken scarfs, organize langars, book *paths*, gold-plating the domes of gurdwaras etc. then sorry to say, we are not the followers of Guru Nanak. The guru had dissuaded us from ceremonial worship but we have again turned in the prohibited direction. Gur Nanak expects us to be role model for others. So let us listen to what the Master says and move a step ahead towards a new revolution.

Giani Balwant Singh 'Kothaguru'
Kothaguru (Bathinda)

*Suni pukar dataar prabh gur nanak jag mahi pathaya
Charan dhoi rehras kar charnamrit sikhian peelaya
Parbrahm puran beahm kalijug andar ikk dikhaya
Chaare pair dharm de chaar varan ikk karaya
Rana rank brabri pairi paavana jag vartaya
Ulta khel piramm da paira uppar sees nivaya
Kalijug baabe tarya satnaam parh mantra sunaya
Kali taaran gur nanak aaya.*

(Bhai Gurdas, 1/23) II 23 II

*Satgur nanak pargatya miti dhund jagg chaanan hoa
Jeo kar sooraj niklya tare chhapey andher paloa
Singh bukey mirgaavali bhanni jaai na dheer dharoa
Jithey baba pair dhar pooja aasan thaapan soa
Sidhasan sabh jagt de nanak aadi matey je koa
Ghar ghar andar dharmsaal hove keertan sada visoa
Baabe tare char chakk nau khand prithvi sach a dhoo
Gurmukh kal vich pargat hoa II 37 II*

(Bhai Gurdas, 1/23)

When Guru Nanak Dev was born in 1469, India was undergoing a phase of depression. It was an age of deplorable social, economic, religious and political degeneration. That is why Guru Nanak had said to Guru Angad, "Take care of this cadabre and infuse a sense of self-esteem in them." Pushing the heritage of gallantry the people had become crestfallen long back. Shankaracharya had intensified the grimness of situation by describing the world as *maya* i.e. illusion, a dream. World includes man's body, family and society as a whole. Renunciation of household life for salvation had been made an integral part of religion. Shankar's theory had demoralized the countrymen. Whosoever preached frustration and pessimism was considered as a great spiritualist during those days. The pessimism of the

above leaders coupled with the state arrogance of Islamic rulers ruined the life of countrymen. They gave in to the culture of the ruling class to the extent of ignoring their own religion and culture.

Guru Nanak felt the pulse of the time and deliberated at length to do away with the two thousand years old malady:

***Baba dekhe dhyan dhar jalti sabh prithvi dis aayi
Baajhau guru gubaar hai hai hai kardi suni lokaayi
Baabe bhekh banaya udasi ki reeti chalaayi
Charhia sodhan dhart lukaayi II 24 II***

(Bhai Gurdas Ji, Var 1)

Gurbani gives a detailed portrayal of the situation prevalent during the times of Guru Nanak Dev. Here is a brief account of the situation.

The guru was very much worried about what was going around him. The public was reeling under the burden of worthless rituals, ceremonies, hypocrisy, ignorance and sectarianism.

Social Condition: The people had abdicated their own ways of life and every sense of dignity. The religious shrines and pilgrimages of Hindus were heavily taxed. The Hindus were so much scared that they worshipped their gods by bolting their doors from inside and they sat outside their doors with Islamic books in their hands just not to invite the wrath of Muslims. Instead of Punjabi they spoke Persian and took pride in being called "Mian". They also prided in wearing Muslim dresses, ornaments and mannerism. The guru has described in detail this cowardice of Hindus:

**aad purakh ka-o alhu kahee-ai saykhaaN aa-ee vaaree.
dayval dayviti-aa kar laagaa aisee keerat chaalee. ||5||
koojaa baaNg nivaaj muslaa neel roop banvaaree.
ghar ghar mee-aa sabhnaaN jee-aaN bolee avar tumaaree. ||6||
(Basant Hindol Mehlaa 1 Ghar 2, page 1191)**

khataree-aa ta Dharam chhodi-aa malaychh bhaakhi-aa gahee.
(Dhanaasree Mehlaa 1 Ghar 3, page 663)
neel bastar lay kaprhay pahiray turak pathaaneer amal kee-aa.
(Mehlaa 1, page 470)

kal parvaan katayb kuraan. pothee pandit rahay puraan.
(Raamkalee Mehlaa 1 Asatpadee-aa, page 903)

abhaakhi-aa kaa kuthaa bakraa khaanaa.
cha-ukay upar kisai na jaanaa.
(Mehlaa 1, page 470)

Political Condition: The political conditions too were not very comfortable. The nawabs perpetrated great oppression on people. The *mukaddams* (revenue officials) behaved with people like wild animals. The guru has depicted this situation as under:

kal kaatee raajay kaasaa-ee Dharam pankh kar udri-aa.
koorh amaavas sach chandarmaa
deesai naahee kah charhi-aa.
ha-o bhaal vikunnee ho-ee. aaDhaarai raahu na ko-ee.
vich ha-umai kar dukh ro-ee.
kaho naanak kin biDh gat ho-ee. ||1||
(Salok Mehlaa 1, page 145)

raajay seeh mukdam kutay.
jaa-ay jagaa-iniH baithay sutay.
chaakar nahdaa paa-iniH ghaa-o.
rat pit kutiho chat jaahu.
(Mehlaa 1, page 1288)

Babar invaded India in 1521 AD. Looting, murdering, setting the properties afire, enslaving the youngsters and outraging the modesty of women he swooped upon Emnabad (then Saidpur) like a hawk. At that time Guru Nanak was putting up with Bhai Lalo. Had there been some other saint or mendicant, he would have escaped days back to a safer place saying,
"What am I to do with battles when I have abandoned my

own house?" But the iron man Nanak wanted to make Babar aware of his atrocities and misdeeds in general.

Babar became the conqueror and intoxicated with pride of conquest he looted Emnabad to his heart's satisfaction and turned the innocents into heaps of dead bodies. The guru has described the miserable condition of people as under:

**jin sir sohan patee-aa maaNgee paa-ay sanDhoor.
say sir kaatee munnee-aniH gal vich aavai Dhoorh.
mehlaa andar hodee-aa hun bahan na milniH hadoor. ||1||
aadays baabaa aadays.**

**aad purakh tayraa ant na paa-i-aa
kar kar daykheh vays. ||1|| rahaa-o.**

**jadahu see-aa vee-aahee-aa laarhay sohan paas.
heedolee charh aa-ee-aa dand khand keetay raas.
uprahu paanee vaaree-ai jhalay jhimkan paas. ||2||
ik lakh lehniH behthee-aa lakh lehniH kharhee-aa.
garee chhuhaaray khaaNdee-aa maanniH sayjrhee-aa.**

**tinH gal silkaa paa-ee-aa tutniH motsaree-aa. ||3||
Dhan joban du-ay vairee ho-ay jinHee rakhay rang laa-ay.
dootaa no furmaa-i-aa lai chalay pat gavaa-ay.
jay tis bhaavai day vadi-aa-ee jay bhaavai day-ay saja-ay. ||4||**

**ago day jay chaytee-ai taaN kaa-it milai saja-ay.
saahaan surat gavaa-ee-aa rang tamaasai chaa-ay.
baabarvaanee fir ga-ee ku-ir na rote khaa-ay. ||5||**

(Raag Aasaa Mehlaa 1 Asatpadee-aa Ghar 3, page 417)

Vis-à-vis the diabolic designs of Babar, Guru Nanak decided to face him head on like a lion and wrote:

**jaisee mai aavai khasam kee banee
taisrhaa karee gi-aan vay laalo.
paap kee janj lai kaablahu Dhaa-i-aa
joree mangai daan vay laalo.
saram Dharam du-ay chhap khalo-ay
koorh firai parDhaan vay laalo.
kaahee-aa baamnaa kee gal thakee agad
parhai saitaan vay laalo.
musalmaanee-aa parheh kataybaa kasat**

meh karahi khudaa-ay vay laalo.
 jaat sanaatee hor hidvaanee-aa ayhi
 bhee laykhai laa-ay vay laalo.
 khoon kay sohilay gavee-ah naanak
 rat kaa kungoo paa-ay vay laalo. ||1||
 saahib kay gun naanak gaavai
 maas puree vich aakh masolaa.
 jin upaa-ee rang ravaa-ee baithaa
 vaykhai vakh ikaylaa.
 sachaa so saahib sach tapaavas sachrhaa
 ni-aa-o karayg masolaa.
 kaa-i-aa kaparh tuk tuk hosee
 hindusataan samaalsee bolaa.
 (Tilang Mehlaa 1, page 722)

While describing the grim reality of the day before Babar, Guru Nanak called him 'Yama' and his army as '*paap ki janj*' (retinue of Sin). The wails of victims of oppression have been described as '*khooon de sohle*' (sanguinary notes while the blood spilled by the tyrant is '*ratt ka kungu*' (vermillion of blood). He also prophesied with authority that this reign of terror would be over in 1597 Vikrami. The guru characterized the bloodbath at Emnabad as 'Maaspuri'. The attack on Emnabad has been described by the guru with date and year. The sins and misdeeds of the mughals too have been narrated with sufficient detail. The life, achievements, patriotism, leonine courage to call a spade a spade on the tyrant's face count for a slap on the face of those who forge escapist theories like that of *maya* for their convenience. It was due to such theories of cowardice that India had to face slavery for centuries. It was Guru Nanak who instilled a new confidence and vigour in a demoralized nation. That is why Mohammad Iqbal said about the guru in one of his poems:

*Phir uthi aakhir sada tauheed ki Punjab se,
 Hind ko ik mard-e-kaamil ne jagaya khwab se.
 (Baang-e-Dara)*

Has any other saint, *bhagat* or poet ever been so fearlessly vocal against injustice at the hands of the state? If at all some such

a great soul exists, I will fall at his feet. Guru Nanak has decried the cowardice of *pathans* also:

ratan vigaarh vigo-ay kuteen mu-i-aa saar na kaa-ee.
(Aasaa Mehlaa 1, page 360)

Always trusting the will of God, Guru Nanak feels very much perturbed at the prevailing state of affairs. Therefore, expressing his resentment before God he says, "O God, the Master of the Universe! How could you become a sympathizer of Khrasan and an adversary to India? Why did you make Babar- the Yama incarnate- invade India? He swooped with his 'retinue of sinners' (army) on India where people are as gentle as a cow. You let the lion (Babar) loose on the flock of cows (Indians). If cows are harmed en masse, who but the cowherd is accountable for the loss? Therefore it is only for you to take the responsibility of indescribable sufferings of the people of Emnabad." This is how the guru describes his anguish:

khuraasaan khasmaanaa kee-aa hindusataan daraa-i-aa.
aapai dos na day-ee kartaa jam kar mugal charhaa-i-aa.
aytee maar pa-ee karlaanay taiN kee darad na aa-i-aa. ||1||
kartaa tooN sabhnaa kaa so-ee.
jay saktaa saktay ka-o maaray taa man ros na ho-ee. ||1|| rahaa-o.
saktaa seehu maaray pai vagai khasmai saa pursaa-ee.
(Aasaa Mehlaa 1, page 360)

The whirlwind of oppression at the hands of Islamic forces had been sweeping for centuries. Bhai Gurdas writes about this tyrannical situation:

Thakur dware dhah ke tih thauri maseet usara
Maaran gau gareeb no dharti uppar paap bibara
(Bhai Gurdas, Var 1/20)

He says one thing more about this reign of terror:
Thamme koi na saadh bin saadh dise na jagg vich koaa
(Bhai Gurdas, Var 1/22)

There were hordes of saints wandering about in India but

they were all dumb before the terror of Islamic regime. Those who called body an illusion or maya had nestled into the caves of mountains to protect this very body. In suchlike circumstances there was only one saint, the ironman Guru Nanak who lulled the tempest of oppression. He went to the Himalayas. The naths and yogis were astonished to see man of the land before them. They questioned him about the situation in 'Maatlok' the world below. According to Bhai Gurdas the guru answered them as under:

Phir puchhan sidh Nanaka maatlok vich kya vartara

The Bhai Gurdas said:

Paap girasi pirthami dhaul khara dhar heth pukara

Sir chhap baithe parbati kaun jagat kau paar utara

(Bhai Gurdas, Var 1/29)

So it was only Guru Nanak who girded up his loins to provide relief to the forsaken humanity. He decided to travel far and wide to disseminate his message. He did not have any political, social or religious support behind his odysseys. Also, he did not have the approval of his own family. He took along only one person viz. Mardana on a path beset with hardships and challenges only. Apart from India he toured to Burmah, Siam, Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, Lanka, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Arab, Egypt and Russia etc.

Baare tare char chakk naukhand prithvi sachha dhoaa

(Bhai Gurdas, Var 1/27)

Baare ditthi pirthavi nave khand jithe tak aahi

(Bhai Gurdas, Var 1/29)

He had a unique way of attracting the people. He would first negate the established taboo by acting against it deliberately and as the reaction came from the other side he would convey his message in a very dauntlessly. Some such occasions prominently include his offering water to the west at Kurukshetra, refusal to participate in the aarti at Jagannathpuri and explain beautifully the ever ongoing cosmic aarti, lying asleep with legs stretched towards Qaaba in Mecca, performing keertan in Baghdad in defiance of the ban. As a result of his gutsy approach towards the pursuit of truth he could put men like Sajjan, Kauda, Vali

Kandhari, Babar, the witches of Bengal, naths and yogis, leftists, Sakts, Shaivas, Vaishnavas, ulemas, pirs, faqirs etc. on the path of righteousness.. He made humanity as a whole eligible for attaining salvation.

Six hundred years from now, no great man had gone on such a long and purposeful journey. The guru made the world familiar with the concept of one Akalpurkh. Bhai Gurdas says:

Kaljug bare taaria satnam parh mantra sunaya

Kal taaran gur nanak aaya.

(Bhai Gurdas, 1/22)

Guru Nanak was the first to give the concept of the attributeless Akalpurkh. Gurbani says:

safal janam har jan kaa upji-aa jin keeno sa-ut biDhaataa.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 532)

(Great is the birth of Guru Nanak's who made God a proud father of his sons.)

Before Guru Nanak mankind was unaware of even the name of God. The peculiarity of the guru lies in the fact that like an average 'godman' he did not make people worship him. He made them worshippers of God.

Another novelty of the guru's personality was that he transgressed the boundaries of his country for delivering his message while the Hindus treated going across the sea as a sin. He brushed aside all such convictions and described world as the abode of true God. He treated the Creation as tangible reality in utter defiance of Shankaracharya's concept of *maya*.

aad sach jugaad sach.

hai bhee sach naanak hosee bhee sach. ||1||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1)

aap sat kee-aa sabh sat. tis parabh tay saglee utpat.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 294)

Another characteristic of the light called Guru Nanak is that it splits into ten with the result that further in the line of

succession it was only the person that changed but the light remained the same. Gurbani says:

jot ohaa jugat saa-ay seh kaa-i-aa fayr paltee-ai.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 966)

Guru Gobind Singh has clarified it further:

**Sri Nanak Angad kar mana
Amar Das Angad pehchana
Amar Das Ram Das kahayo
Sadhan lakha moorh nahi payo
Bhin bhinn sabahu kar jana
Ek roop kinahu pehchana
Jin jana tin hi sidh paayi
Bin samjhe sidh hath na aayi**

(Bachtra Natak, Chapter 8)

Guru Nanak was the first Holy man who did not support renunciation and described household as the best way of life. 'Sarv dharm vikhe grihasth pradhan hai'(Bhai Gurdas). He preached his followers to work hard, remember with every breath, the name of God and share with others (Kirt karo, naam japo, vand chhako). Gurbani says:

**udam karaydi-aa jee-o tooN kamaavdi-aa sukh bhunch.
Dhi-aa-idi-aa tooN parabhoo mil naanak utree chint. ||1||**
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 522)

**aagaahaa koo taraagh pichhaa fayr na muhadrhaa.
naanak sijh ivayhaa vaar bahurh na hovee janamrhaa. ||1||**
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1096)

The guru's teachings equipped the people in general with fortitude and a spirit of altruism. They became ready to rise tooth and nail against social evils and serve the country.

Guru Nanak's views on Babar were an indication towards the struggle that lay ahead. Similarly, Guru Angad exposed the hypocrisy of Humayun without any fear in his heart. Guru Amar Das built a narrative of classless and casteless society by

initiating the tradition of Langar.

All the ten gurus had the same belief that God created the world and if Creator is Reality how can creation be *maya* or myth? The guru clarified:

sachay tayray khand sachay barahmand.

sachay tayray lo-a sachay aakaar.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 463)

ih jag sachai kee hai koth-rhee sachay kaa vich vaas.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 463)

sat karam jaa kee rachnaa sat. mool sat sat utpat.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 284)

The gurbani ordains remembrance of the Holy name with every breath and be righteous at the level of word and deed and serve humanity. If need be there should be no hesitation in sacrificing life also. This is in fact the main secret of a successful life on earth.

THE GREAT MASTER- GURU NANAK DEV

Baljinder Singh Chahal
'Madho Jhanda'

Guru Nanak Dev was a divine personality revered by all as a spiritual leader. There was a magnetic charisma around his personality which attracted one and all. But, for his father Mehta Kalu he was no more than a son. It was only his sister Bibi Nanaki and Rai Bular who could see the divine element in him. That is why the reverence they both had for Nanak is beyond the power of words to describe.

When Guru Nanak appeared on the scene, the society was badly afflicted with superstitions and a lot of hypocrisy in the name of religion. Common man was subject to exploitation at various levels viz. social, economic, religious and political. The Brahmanical forces i.e. priesthood had entangled the people in general in rites and rituals, incantations etc. As a result they were drifting away from the essence of religion and losing faith in God. The ruling elite took it as a right to humiliate the common man. So the advent of a charismatic Master like Guru Nanak in such a situation was no less than a blessing as if God Himself had listened to the prayer of the suffering humanity and descended in human garb to salvage the mankind from their travails. Bhai Gurdas writes on this scenario:

Satgur Nanak pargatia miti dhund jagg chanan hoaa
Jeo kar sooraj nikalia tare chhape andher paloaa

Bhai Gurdas says that the birth of Guru Nanak on this earth dispelled the fog of sins giving way to a floodlight that brought a ray of hope for the entire fauna and flora.

The guru opposed the hypocrisy masquerading as religious praxis. He started working for the welfare of humanity from his very childhood. Opposition to wearing janeu in very tender age, dialogue with the priest over this issue, feeding the hungry sadhus in the name of true bargain, doing job in Sultanpur, enlightenment after a dip in the River Vein, giving mool mantra to the sangat and setting out on four odysseys in

different directions formed a part of his altruistic drive.

A number of godmen had come made their presence felt before Guru Nanak also but none of them could come out with anything new. It fell to the share of the guru only to become iconoclastic and rejecting outrightly all time-begone traditions and customs. He established an altogether new path which was quite offbeat and scientific.

He had an intensive study of all contemporary religions Islam and Hinduism. To utilize this study and facilitate his target of communication he toured widely in all directions. These travels are known as four udasis. His first odyssey was in the east where he visited Hindu pilgrimages. His second tour was in the Deccan. During this travel he toured to Buddhist monasteries. During the third odyssey he went to the religious places of naths, siddhas and yogis. There he had a very meaningful dialogue with siddhas. His fourth odyssey was directed at the countries of central east including Mecca, Baghdad etc. During this odyssey he is said to have made a very in-depth study of Muslim scriptures.

If we look into Guru Nanak's travels we shall come to know that the prime objective of these odysseys was human interest. It was straightway a challenge to the fanatics because he had taken along Mardana - a low caste. It was an irritant for the votaries of casteism. The guru performed keertan on gurbani compositions and Mardana played rabab sometimes in such areas where rendition of music and raga was strictly prohibited. By refusing the delicious meal of Malik Bhago and accepting the humble food of Bhai Lalo he in a way announced that he had great regard for the livelihood earned by the sweat of brow and scant respect for those who exploit others for filling their coffers.

Guru Nanak's odysseys are a testimony to the fact that traveling in different directions he was imbued in the cultural hue of the specific area to propagate Sikhism. He exhibited his commitment to truth by calling Babar tyrant on his face. He did not spare even the Creator in complaining when he said:

aytee maar pa-ee karlaanay taiN kee darad na aa-i-aa. ||1||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 360)

It is not an easy job to shake the people of different religious faiths out of their self-made cocoons of conviction. But this was what for the guru had come to this world. He would put up his viewpoint fearlessly before the listener and supported his contention with logic. There are so many examples when he succeeded in bringing home his point with proper reasoning. These examples include offering water in the opposite direction at Hardwar by which he told the pundits about the futility of such rituals.

In fact, the guru has castigated that segment of society which was misleading the gullible masses in the name of religion. He did not make any particular religion the target of his denunciation but tagetted only those who used religion as a shield to hide their sins. He told them that they were cheating not only the people bur God also. He exposes them as below:

***Koor bol murder khaai
Avari to samjhaavan jaai***

He embraced the neglected, underprivileged and downtrodden people in the society. These laborious people would work for these parasites and were belittled notwithstanding. But the guru very explicitly took them into his warm embrace when he said:

**neechaa andar neech jaat neechee hoo at neech.
jithai neech samaalee-an tithai nadar tayree bakhsees. ||4||3||
naanak tin kai sang saath vadi-aa si-o ki-aa rees.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 15)**

Alongside this, the guru chastised the ruling class of the country very stringently. He was an epitome of humility but he was harsh in his tone while saying the truth. He went to the extent of calling the rulers lions and the administrators as dogs.

**raajay seeh mukdam kutay.
jaa-ay jagaa-iniH baithay sutay.
chaakar nahdaa paa-iniH ghaa-o.
rat pit kutiho chat jaahu.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1288)**

Throughout the world, woman has been looked down upon by the male dominant society. In the contemporary society the condition of woman was very pitiable. She was taken as an object of lust gratification. The Hindus treated her as footwear and was kept away from religious and social rights. According to Islamic shraih also she was not held at par with man. Thw witness of two women was taken as equal to one man. But Nanak showered all respect on her by describing her as the mother of all great men including emperors.

bhand jammee-ai bhand nimmee-ai bhand mangan vee-aahu.

bhandahu hovai dostee bhandahu chalai raahu.

bhand mu-aa bhand bhaalee-ai bhand hovai banDhaan.

so ki-o mandaa aakhee-ai jit jameh raajaan.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 473)

Wherever the guru went anywhere he left his footprints there. He was addressed differently in different areas according to the local language and culture. For the Sikhs here he was guru. The Muslims treated him as 'pir' while he was 'Nanak lama' for Tibetans. The people of Egypt called him 'Nanak Vali' and for those of Saudi Arab he was 'Vali-e- Hind'.

Guru Nanak spent the last part of his life in Kartarpur (Pakistan). He ploughed his fields after the age of sixty. With his message he wanted to tell the Sikhs that there is no antagonism between spiritual life and the life of a householder. He wanted his faith to rest on very firm foundations. He handed over the responsibility of the spiritual throne to Bhai Lehna and rechristened him as Guru Angad. Here also he presented the unprecedented example of impartiality by rising above love for his own sons. The panth initiated by Guru Nanak Dev was carried ahead by the other gurus and taken to new heights.

After Guru Nanak, Gur Angad Dev made Khadur Sahib the nucleus of Sikhism. He preserved the bani of the first Master and prepared the Gurmukhi script for Punjabi language. It was a much needed and necessary task. The achievements of Guru Amar Das include prominently, the settlement of Goindwal, popularizing Langar among the Sikhs and establishment of 22 Manjis and 55 Peerhis for the propagation of Sikhism.

Similarly, Guru Ram Das contributed a lot towards perpetuating the message of Guru Nanak. He settled Ram Das Nagar for this purpose which came to be known as Amritsar later. The first Master Guru Arjan Dev edited the Adi Granth and included the bani of the gurus and allied bhagats in it. The sixth Guru Hargobind ji wore two swords Miri and Piri which were symbolic of a rare combination of saint and soldier. The seventh Guru Hari Rai ji made tours far and wide to spread the spirit of Sikhism all around. The eighth guru Harikishan ji occupied the seat of spirituality at a very younger age. But in spite of this he served the patients of smallpox which had spread like an epidemic at that time wholeheartedly. In the process he himself got infected of the dreaded disease. The ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur ji laid down his life for the protection of human rights. The movement of driving humanity on the path of righteousness with full awareness of safeguarding their rights reached its culmination with Guru Gobind Singh who established Khalsa Panth. He sacrificed his four sons after his father and treated all the followers as his sons. Thus Sikhs started their growth journey from Guru Nanak and completed it with Guru Gobind Singh's "***Khalsa mero roop hai khas.***"

THE RELEVANCE OF GURU NANAK TODAY

**Manjit Kaur Dhiman
Sherpur Khurd (Ludhiana)**

Guru Nanak Dev is known by different names in different countries and places. He is Nanak Kadamdar in Russia, Baba Nanak in Iraq, Nanak Vali in Egypt, Nanak Rishi in Nepal, Nanakacharya in Sri Lanka, Nanak Pir in Baghdad, Baba Fu Sa in China, Nanak Lama in Tibet, Guru Rimpoche in Sikkim-Bhutan and Vali Hind in Mecca. Besides, in India herself, he is known by various names like sant, faqir, Paighambar or Satguru by different people.

He is our conscience, our mirror. If we look at this mirror we can have a glimpse of God in it. But all depends on we have to look into this mirror. When Guru Nanak Dev took birth the condition of India was deplorable on every front. The upper class exploited the poor people in a very ruthless manner. Society was in a very tight grip of superstitions and useless rituals in the name of religion. That is why Guru Nanak was forced to say:

Raaje sheehn mukaddam kutte

It is no different even today. The ministers and bureaucracy are out to fleece them. At that time humanity had got a messiah in the form of Guru Nanak Dev but the so-called saints today are only a slur on the name of saintliness. Contrary to Guru Nanak who preferred the hospitality of Bhai Lalo the modern impostors take pride in moving about in a princely manner with body guards accompanying them in their vehicles with red beacon lights atop. Baba Nanak had traversed the whole world mostly on foot. Today we are following everything prohibited by the guru.

The condition of woman is almost the same today as it was in Guru Nanak's times as the male dominance remains intact. Today, the ultrasound machine tells it is a female fetus and the poor unborn daughter is killed in the very womb. In case she survives this onslaught she is subject to the lusty rapist's claws anytime during youth. If at all she is married there is a likelihood

of her being a victim of dowry death.

The guru had urged man to earn by the sweat of brow but who likes to work these days. Everybody is out to usurp the right of others. Theft, chainsnatchings, deceit etc. have become an integral part of our life. The guru aptly said:

**chang-aa-ee-aa buri-aa-ee-aa vaachai Dharam hadoor.
karmee aapo aapnee kay nayrhai kay door.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 8)

Guru Nanak traveled to all the directions for general welfare. He put the sinners strayed from the right track like Malik Bhago, Sajjan and Kauda on the path of righteousness. That is why he had preferred to accept the humble food of Bahi Lalo over the delicious dishes of Malik Bhago. There are hordes of saints even today but they are a shame on the very name of saintliness. How shameful it feels to know that the ladies living in their deras are their keeps only in the guise of saints.

Modern man's get-rich-quick tendency has encouraged dishonest means of livelihood against the preachings of the guru in favour of working hard and sharing with others. We have forgotten the teachings of Guru Nanak altogether. He had taken along Mardana, a lowcaste along on his tours. He played rabab for him and was treated as a friend. But here we are not ready to discard our caste tags.

Guru Nanak was a man of great knowledge. He had stated centuries back:

Pataala pataal lakh aagasa aagas

The scientists of even today are groping in the darkness over such issues.

The guru had advocated *grihathashrama* rather than the route of escape to mountain caves or forests. He had said that God is one and He can be attained with the knowledge under the discipleship of guru. But we tend to follow the whims of mind which controls our action in life. That is why Guru Nanak has urged man to bridle the wayward mind which paces way to the conquest of world.

Mann jeete jagg jeet

Now it seems as if only Baba Nanak can save us otherwise the society has reached the verge of ruin. Even in the 21st. century we believe in the efficacy of superstitions like treating the normal things like sneezing at the time of starting anything or stepping outdoors, a cat crossing your way, the hoot of an owl etc. as ominous.

Let us hope that we shall abide by the teachings of Guru Nanak in word and spirit in the times to come.

THE PLACE OF WOMAN IN GURU NANAK'S BANI

Dr. Mandeep Kaur
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Although Guru Nanak Dev was the founder of Sikhism yet he is revered as the leader of mankind as a whole. During his time the social and political conditions were very bad in India. Particularly, the condition of woman was quite miserable. She was treated as an object in society. She was always dependent on man for her security. Religion, culture and philosophy have been equally responsible for this state of affairs.

Viewed in historical perspective the position of woman has always remained secondary in society. Manus treats woman as the source of all miseries. She was called sudra and like sudra she was supposed to serve only her husband within the four walls of her home. Under the influence of ancient books like 'Manusmriti' Tulsi Das issued a verdict against woman by likening her to drum, uncouth rustic, sudra, cattle etc. and justified beating her:

Dhor gawaar soodra pasu nari
Yeh sab taaran ke adhikari

The condition of woman was far from being satisfactory in Jainism and Buddhism. Buddha had denied entry to woman in the Sangh. Jainism calls woman a she-serpent, distractor maya and bondage only.

In Islam the condition of woman was rather worse. Men were free to marry more than one woman. Women were ordered to remain veiled which becomes evident from still prevalent practice of burqa. She could not lead *nimaazis*. The witness of two women was held equal to one man. Similarly Bible condemns woman as a fragile pot. Naths and yogis have also used derogatory words like she-wolf for woman and described her as a great obstacle in the way of yoga. She, they say, eats into the vitals of man like a termite.

Amidst such hostility of attitude towards woman, Guru Nanak raised his revolutionary voice in favour of woman.

Recognizing the creative power of woman the guru raised his voice to ensure for her a position of parity in society at social level. In those days, under the Brhamanical values, woman was treated as impure during the menstrual period. She was not allowed to enter the kitchen. The guru criticized this attitude saying that there was nothing pure or unpure about this otherwise natural process. It was rather necessary for reproductive dynamism.

**ji-o joroo sirnaavanee aavai vaaro vaar.
joothay joothaa mukh vasai nit nit ho-ay khu-aar.
soochay ayhi na aakhee-ahi bahan je pindaa Dho-ay.
soochay say-ee naankaa jin man vasi-aa so-ay. ||2||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 472)**

Woman is not dirty or polluted nor those who wash or bathe well are pure. The pure are those who have God housed in their heart.

Like menstruation the period of maternity too was taken as impure but the guru took it as pure and honoured woman by calling her the creator. He said that birth and death are governed by God. The perpetuity of creation is impossible without them. Thus lauding the feminine qualities, the guru boosted her morale. He said that *sootak* is everywhere:

**jay kar sootak mannee-ai sabh tai sootak ho-ay.
gohay atai lakrhee andar keerhaa ho-ay.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 472)**

Actual *sootak* is avarice, falsehood, arrogance and adultery. The one who has realized truth with the help of his guru does not get scary of *sootak*.

**sabho sootak bharam hai doojai lagai jaa-ay.
.....
naanak jinHee gurmukh bujhi-aa tinHaa sootak naahi. ||3||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 472)**

Recognizing the capacity of woman in 'Asa di Var' Guru Nanak says that without her the reproduction of the world. Since man is also born of woman he must not denigrate her. As creator

she is next to God only. To bring the condemners of woman to their senses the guru said:

bhand jammee-ai bhand nimmee-ai bhand mangan vee-aahu.

bhandahu hovai dostee bhandahu chalai raahu.

bhand mu-aa bhand bhaalee-ai bhand hovai bandhaan.

so ki-o mandaa aakhee-ai jit jameh raajaan.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 473)

The guru also affirmed that the attainment of God is possible in the form of woman only. God is husband and soul is wife. The very tone of entire gurbani is feminine. Accepting God as husband and human race as wife, the guru took a solid step towards establishing the identity of woman.

In Baramah also the guru has talked of husband wife relations. Woman attains the status of suhagan by marrying God. This communion has dissolution and a bond of parity. In Barahmah the gur has accorded prime importance to the bodily desires of woman.

The naths and yogis have condemned woman as an obstacle in the way of yoga but the guru has taken exception to it. He has given importance to household life and castigated the renunciates sitting hidden in the forests and mountain caves saying that their *sannyas* was all humbug. What is the point in renouncing your own home and then go for begging food at the doors of the householders? He asked the escapist yogis. The libido cannot be controlled with the apparent *sannyas* only. While different religions considered woman as an obstacle in the path of attaining God, Guru Nanak revered her as guiding star. Giving priority to household life he says:

so girhee jo nigarahu karai.

jap tap sanjam bheekhi-aa karai.

punn daan kaa karay sareer.

so girhee gangaa kaa neer.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 952)

Apart from the above, the guru laid stress on remarriage and condemned the male thought of keeping woman as

concubine, servant, danseuse etc.

Thus it becomes evident that the guru has treated woman at par with man. In Gurbani God is the husband of the world and all are forms of woman. He raised voice against many evils like **sati, purdah**, child marriage, female infanticide etc.- the factors responsible for the secondary position of woman. Guru Nanak says that when God knew no discrimination while creating the world man had no right to go against His will. Therefore woman deserves equal status at every level. Woman is man's strength, not weakness. He was the first great man of the world to have raised voice in favour of woman's emancipation.

'PATI' MAHLA 1: A STUDY

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Making the alphabet of Gurmukhi script a basis, the bani of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Amar Das is available in 'pati' form. Guru Nanak's 'Raga Asa Pati' is considered the first special literary 'pati' composition of Punjabi. As poetic form pati is a folk poetic form. Therefore, it is difficult to say that the first ever pati was written by Guru Nanak. The possibility that pati must have been written much before without its coming into our notice, cannot be ruled out. Well, its structure and its letters may vary from Guru Nanak's pati. According to Mahankosh pati means a writing board and in the context of gurbani it is a particular bani with preachings in alphabetical order.

Creative Process

If gurbani related literature is studied then Janamsakhi literature comes forth as the old source of gurbani studies. While Janamsakhi literature throws light on the life of Guru Nanak it also unravels before us the creative process of gurbani and its objective as under:

"Guru Nanak ji ko sab agam nigam ki sojhi hai pandha to ek bahana hai aap pooran purkh hai hor larke jo sang ke khelne wale sangi hain tin ko bhi ehi abhyas karaven pamesar ji keean baatan sunne ka aur koi khel nahi khelte j' kuchh khel karni taan pamesar ji ki barta hi karni leela karni to pamesar ji ki ate oh balak bhi pamesar ke naam mein nagan hoi rahe hain. Taan pandhe keha baran akhri likho taan guru baabe ji ne asa raag vich shabd bolia. Asa Mahla 1 Pati likhi."

Thus according to the Sakhi writers Guru Nanak composed pati at the age of about seven. Basing their observation on Janamsakhi literature Dr. Jeet Singh Seetal, Dr. S.S. Amo and Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi describe pati to have been composed by the guru in childhood.

The biggest problem that comes in the way of believing the Janamsakhi literature is that the Janamsakhi does not come true to the criterion of gurmata in so many contexts. Therefore, it may be possible that pati was written in a bit mature stage than childhood. There is no denying that pati was composed in childhood but its form and content was different from the Asa Raag pati.

Ideological Study

On thought pattern pati poetry is created by the contradictory group. This contradiction is that of mundane knowledge and spiritual knowledge. The letters given on the pati it does give you worldly knowledge but the possibility of spiritual knowledge also exists. This is what has been highlighted by the guru. In ideological context, the *rahau* verse of pati is very important. This is as under:

man kaahay bhoolay moorh manaa.

jab laykhaa dayveh beeraa ta-o parhi-aa. ||1|| rahaa-o.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 432)

This *rahau* verse has been explained like this.

"O my stupid mind! Why do you forget (Him)? (Because you are educated?). Brother, we shall deem you educated when you will be able to give a complete account of your deeds.

The letters are taken as source of knowledge but this knowledge can be mundane as well as divine. These can help us recognize the Supreme Reality also:

eevrhee aad purakh hai daataa aapay sachaa so-ee.

aynaa akhraa meh jo gurmukh boojhai tis sir laykh na ho-ee. ||2||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 432)

In pati, the topics like understanding God, praising Him, purging mind of all egoism, the Divine command, grace of God, worldly ostentation, omnipresence of God and the fear of crossing the ocean of existence etc.

tatai taaroo bhavjal ho-aa taa kaa ant na paa-i-aa.
 naa tar naa tulhaa ham boodas taar layhi taaran raa-i-aa. ||19||
 (Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 433)

In the end of 'pati' the guru presents himself as a poet:

aa-irhai aap karay jin chhodee jo kichh karnaa so kar rahi-aa.
 karay karaa-ay sabh kichh jaanai naanak saa-ir iv kahi-aa. ||35||1||
 (Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 434)

Genric Studies

From the perspective of genre 'pati' is related to both poetic and folk form (s). Guru Nanak had before him the already existent specific literature based on days, dates, months and the letters of alphabet. The form adopted by the guru seems more close to the folk form than specific literature. The important genres of folk poetry have been used by Guru Nanak and other gurus also to deliver their spiritual message so as to make it reach the people more easily. Thus the tradition of expressing the feelings on the basis of alphabet letters was in vogue and it kept going parallel to each other. Guru Nanak accepted the impact of both folk and poetic form (s) but 'pati' gives out some different symptoms which show it as an independent genre.

In the context of literature we see method of form and contemplation as complementary to each other. The following are some symptoms of 'pati' form:

1. Alphabtical order of pati is different from the present one. It starts with ਸ, ਦ, ਓ and ਙ. Except ਟ and ਟ rest of the order is the same.
2. Every stanza starts with a particular letter.
3. The pronunciation of these le᳚tters is like present except that of ਟ and ਟ
4. Except the rahau stanza it has 35 stanzas based on letters.
5. The bi-verse poetic form operates in each stanza.
6. This 'pati' is composed under raga Asa.

'Pati' Mahla 3: Comparative Study

Guru Amar Das has also made use of the same tradition and artistic devices which the first Master had used. But the alphabetical order and number of letters is different in this 'pati'. It has 18 stanzas instead of 35. Like Guru Nanak the third Master too has taken into consideration that 'pati' is good means of imparting knowledge. The knowledge given by the priest cultivates demerits more than merits in the disciples according to Gur Amar Das.:

**tuDh sir likhi-aa so parh pandit avraa no na sikhaal bikhi-aa.
pahilaa faahaa pa-i-aa paaDhay pichho day gal chaatrhi-aa. ||5||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 434-35)**

Like Gur Nanak, Guru Amar Das too creates worldly 'pati' as ideal 'pati'. The creative device of both these 'patis' overtly comes before us. Guru Nanak has composed 'pati' at a conscious level and he is aware of this fact that attainment of knowledge through alphabet letters is possible and he is out to transform the mundane knowledge into spiritual. Although poetry based on folk literature and specific literature alphabet had been written also before Guru Nanak Dev but the 'pati' written in raga Asa by the guru occupies a unique place from the viewpoint of form and content.

Mard-e- Kamil (THE MAN OF SUBSTANCE)

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Muslim invasions on Punjab had started in the mid of seventh century. After Arab conquerors the Afghan invaders had unleashed a wave of terror in the country as a whole. Punjab lay between two Muslim capitals: Delhi and Kabul. So, the first sojourn of the invaders to reach Delhi was Punjab only. The Afghans and Turks invaded Punjab several times and established their rule. That is why in comparison to the rest of country Punjab had to face more hardships. By the time Guru Nanak took birth, Punjab had been under the Muslim rule for more than three centuries. When he was born Behlol Lodhi (1451-1489) was the ruler in Delhi. He was followed by Sikander Lodhi (1489-1517) after whom Ibrahim Lodhi ruled from 1517 to 1526. In Punjab Lahore and Deepalpur were under the rule of Tatar Khan who was killed in 1485 near Ambala in a battle. He was succeeded by Said Khan as interim governor and in 1500 Tatar Khan's son Daulat Khan was appointed the ruler of Punjab.

After loot and arson the prime objective of the Muslim rulers was to propagate Islam. So they perpetrated most diabolic atrocities on innocent people. They imposed taxes on Hindu pilgrimages and razed to dust their religious shrines. The rate of conversion was far higher in Punjab in comparison to the rest of country.

All was not well in religious life of Punjab as well. It had assumed very formidable form. The Bhagti movement had gained firm roots in South India. On one hand spiritual leaders like Narsi Mehta, Ramanand, Namdev and Eknath had launched a drive against the Brahmanical exploitation of the gullible masses while on the other the naths and yogis too had established themselves.

At the time of Guru Nanak's birth the Hindu society was split dismally in castes, varnas etc. The priest class gave fillip to just an ostentatious religion governed by rites and rituals only. They presented before the credulous masses the image of a

fearsome God pronouncing blood curdling punishments. Entangling the common man in the terror of infernal fire, vice-virtue, charity, transmigration of soul etc. they had paralysed his confidence and morale with these invisible chains.

The condition of woman was never so lamentable as it was during those days. She was awfully discriminated against and treated no better than footwear. Even in 'religious' literature she was depicted as an object of lust gratification. Giving up woman was the first pre-requisite of a religious man.

It was in such a state of affairs that an iron man like Nanak emerged on the scene. His clarion call was so forceful that it rocked the throne of the rulers. Guru Nanak was the first personality in the history of religion who beside talking about salvation or attainment of God also chastised the social, economic and political fabric of his times in the choicest words. Paying tribute to this voice Mohammad Iqbal wrote:

**Phir uthi aakhir sada tauheed ki Punjab se,
Hind ko ik mard-e-kaamil ne jagaya khwab se.**

Bhai Gurdas has written about the situation in the wake of Guru Nanak's birth:

Satgur Nanak pargatia miti dhund jagg chaanan hoaa

The gur was born in 1469 at Rai Bhoi Ki Talwandi to the parents Mata Tripta and Mehta Kalu. His father was an official under Rai Bular Bhatti. His sister Bibi Nanaki was five years elder to him. He was a child of very sensitive and pensive nature. At the age of six he was sent to Gopal Pundit for learning Hindi, to Pt. Brij Lal for learning Sanskrit in 1478 and Maulavi Qutabdin for learning Persian in 1482. Thereafter, he learnt Apbhransh, Prakrit and Arabic also. Besides, he was comfortable in Bengali, Marathi, Gujrati and Pali as well. It was due to his intensive knowledge only that he could write so rich literature and that too in common man's language. The diction of Guru Granth Sahib is comparatively closer to the Vedic language than Sanskrit. He provide a very rich vocabulary to Punjabi language. He imbued foreign words also in Punjabi. He had a firm grip on language and a well-restrained and discipline language results into proverbial

sentences like:

"Apne hathin apna aape hi kaaj sanwaariye"

"Manda kise na aakhiye"

"Moorkhe na na lujhiye"

He wrote his bani in poetry and expressed the central theme through *shingar ras*, *adbhut ras*, *bhyanak ras*, *raudra ras*, *karuna ras*, *veebhats ras* etc. Only Guru Nanak could define God in such a crisp manner through the pronunciation of ॐ. He describes God as One i.e. Indivisible, without birth, Timeless and Attributeless. He is Fearless and without any enmity and Infinite. He was familiar with the fact that music is an art which affects human mind best of all.

Except Japuji Sahib, he composed his entire bani in ragas. He recited it in 19 ragas. Recognizing the importance of music he kept Mardana, the rabab player with him throughout his life. He used a good variety of folk poetic forms like Var, Alauhnis, Baramah, Arti, Kuchajji, Suchajji etc. Apart from these he wrote Babar Bani, Sidh Gosht etc.

The guru castigated the priesthood for distortion of religion. At the age of nine his refusal to be initiated into Hinduism by wearing the sacred thread was in a way, a rebellion against the established rituals of the day. It was a great challenge to the Brahmin dominated society. He raised his voice against some other rituals also which included sootak-paatak (the beliefs pertaining to birth and death), good omen-bad omen, offering water to the sun, observance of fasts, organizing shoguns etc. All this have nothing to do with religion, spirituality or their goal i.e. attainment of God. The godmen hithertofore had been stressing on virtues like compassion, humility, peace and worship of God only but here Guru Nanak was founding a faith based on reason or logic. He did not project God as a judicial authority sitting on a raised platform to pronounce punishments for the bad souls. Rather he described Him as attributeless but permeating the entire expanse of Nature. God according to Nanak is the creator and destroyer of the universe. He cannot be dictated and nothing in the universe is without His will.

bhai vich pavan vahai sadvaa-o.

bhai vich chaleh lakh daree-aa-o.

bhai vich agan kadhai vaygaar.

bhai vich Dhartee dabee bhaar.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 464)

The guru spread the knowledge monopolized by the so called managers of religion to the common man. He lambasted the the so-called scholars of Vedas and appealed to those mired in the darkness of ignorance to espouse logic. The actual purpose of education, he said, is freedom of mind, altruism and awareness.

Vidya veechari taan par-upkari

Guru Nanak was an epoch maker who cared for the welfare of mankind as a whole. He did not just object to the existence of some social or individual drawback but became vocal against it in pungent words in the larger interest of social reform. He described social evils like untouchability, gender based indiscrimination and economic disparities as an affront to the Creator. He respected woman as a paragon of humility, contentment, love, sacrifice and self-restraint and brought her at par with man. These are the qualities acquired by man through austere penance while Nature has already endowed woman with these virtues. He describes woman as *bhanda* i.e. pot that contains the miracle of creation, civilization, values, religion and intellect. She does not only create her progeny but performs the duty of designing their destiny as well. The kings and emperors before whom we bend with respect are born by woman only. Then how can we belittle woman?

parh parh gadee ladee-ah parh parh bharee-ah saath.

parh parh bayrhee paa-ee-ai parh parh gadee-ah khaat.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 467)

bhand jammee-ai bhand nimmee-ai bhand mangan vee-aahu.

bhandahu hovai dostee bhandahu chalai raahu.

bhand mu-aa bhand bhaalee-ai bhand hovai banDhaan.

so ki-o mandaa aakhee-ai jit jameh raajaan.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 473)

The guru said that woman is just another name for *grihashth* i.e household life. He chided the sannyasis for leaving their women at home. He set the example by himself leading a common household life. According to him, God can be attained even as a householder.

Along with rights Guru Nanak talked of duties also. Through *kuchajji* poetic form he condemned the ones who strayed from their duties waste much of their time in gossip. In other words he has scolded all those who indulge in useless pursuits in utter neglect of their duties as human beings, as sheer derelicts.

**galeen asee changee-aa aachaaree buree-aah.
manhu kusuDhaa kaalee-aa baahar chitvee-aah.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 85)

The guru has described the contemporary political scene very minutely. The invasions of the Turks and Afghans had made the life of people in general very miserable. The rulers had subjected them to exploitation, insult, humiliation, graft and torture.

**kaajee ho-ay kai bahai ni-aa-ay.
fayray tasbee karay khudaa-ay.
vadhee lai kai hak gavaa-ay.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 951)

He showered choicest invectives on rulers and their subordinate officers:

**raajay seeh mukdam kutay.
jaa-ay jagaa-iniH baithay sutay.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1288)

In this age of repression the invasion of Babar deserves special mention. The guru was an eye witness to it. The tyrant Babar too seems to be at the receiving end before Guru Nanak. Babar invaded India thrice. The guru writes:

**jaisee mai aavai khasam kee banee
taisrhaa karee gi-aan vay laalo.**

**paap kee janj lai kaablahu Dhaa-i-aa
joree mangai daan vay laalo.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 722)

In 1520 Babar crossed Chenab and occupied Sialkot. Then he proceeded to Saidpur (Emnabad) where he let loose a reign of terror by indiscriminate killings and looting at large scale. The guru was returning from Mecca after his third odyssey in 1521. He had devastated Saidpur. Describing the scene of wails renting the air with a heavy heart he says that the bridegroom roaring like a wild lion attacks the sleeping city with the baraat of sinners i.e. army and the victims are just helpless before him.

**jin sir sohan patee-aa maaNgee paa-ay sanDhoor.
say sir kaatee munnee-aniH gal vich aavai Dhoorh.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 417)

The women of this city who remained bedecked with beautiful jewels, silken dresses and prided in being *suhagins* had been raped and ruined today. Their husbands had been done to death.

**kahaa so khayl tabaylaa ghorhay
kahaa bhayree sehnaa-ee.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 417)

The towering mansions, horse stables, humdrum of the city Saidpur had been turned to ashes. Those who took refuge in chants and incantations for protection from Babar too had been killed as abject slaves. Shuddered at this bestiality Guru Nanak complains against God saying:

aapai dos na day-ee kartaa jam kar mugal charhaa-i-aa.

aytee maar pa-ee karlaanay taiN kee darad na aa-i-aa. ||1||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 360)

Along with Babar, the guru blames men and women as also the local rulers who he thought were responsible for this sorry state of affairs. The unlawfully or sinfully amassed wealth has made them see this day. About such ill-gotten wealth he writes:

paapaa baajhahu hovai naahee mu-i-aa saath na jaa-ee.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 417)

Man keeps struggling to earn wealth through unfair means but it is of no use to him either in hard times or at the time of death.

The teachings of Guru Nanak are a testimony to this fact that he does not just criticize the shortcomings of the social, economic and political set up of his times but makes earnest effort also to improve upon them. He does not only talk about the well being of mankind as a whole but travels 40000 kilometers to spread this message by having a dialogue with the intelligentsia at home and abroad through his odysseys. Guru Nanak Dev is known by different names in different countries and places. He is Nanak Kadamdar in Russia, Baba Nanak in Iraq, Nanak Vali in Egypt, Nanak Rishi in Nepal, Nanakacharya in Sri Lanka, Nanak Pir in Baghdad, Baba Fu Sa in China, Nanak Lama in Tibet, Guru Rimpoche in Sikkim-Bhutan and Vali Hind in Mecca. Besides, in India herself, he is known by various names like sant, faqir, Paighambar or Satguru by different people. He spent the last part of his life on the banks of Ravi and ploughed his fields as an ordinary farmer at Kartarpur- a town settled by himself. He not only scolded the swindlers masquerading as men of piety but his own sons also who had swerved from the right path. Showing a sense of impartiality he bequeathed the seat of guruship to Bhai Lehna instead of retaining it in his family unlike the common godmen. He started a revolutionary campaign of awareness which culminated into the formation of an organized fledged Sikh faith in future. This was the forerunner movement for the establishment of a classless and casteless society. This epoch maker spiritual guide of humanity passed way on 22 September 1539.

GURU NANAK BANI AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

**Roop Lal Roop
Village - Bhelan (Jalandhar)**

About three centuries before the emergence of Gur Nanak Dev on the social scene there had been an acute chaos in the country at all levels. The libertine rulers and their minions would lift beautiful women from the Hindu homes and keep them as concubines or wives. Woman had become the most vulnerable unit in society. There was none to listen to her woes. The Muslim rulers took full advantage of these chaotic conditions and set upon propagating Islam. Our religious leadership also extended all cooperation to them. It is said that Baba Farid alone concerted more than three lakh persons to Islam.

Sikander Lodhi would announce unscrupulously that he had converted 4,32,000 kafirs to momins and murdered 2,63,000 Hindus- an act that would open the gates of heaven for him and his progeny. The Hindus were taxed heavily and they were not allowed to wear ornaments of gold and silver. No Hindu could keep surplus foodgrain at his home. The captives were made to grind 50 seers of wheat and whoever failed to obey was beaten mercilessly. The atrocities of Sikander Lodhi include razing to dust the Hindu temples and building mosques in their place. He had almost eliminated the temples of Mathura and given their idols to be used as weights to the butchers. The guru had seen this all with his own eyes. How could he, the pious soul put up with all this. Condemning this barbarity he writes:

kal kaatee raajay kaasaa-ee Dharam pankh kar udri-aa.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 145)

Raising finger at the animalism of rulers was no sudden happening. To assuage the wounds of suffering humanity, he had been contemplating since childhood at conscious level. It started with his flat refusal to wear the sacred thread at the age of twelve. It was his first rebellious step against the system. Rejecting the dainty dishes of Malik Bhago in favour of the humble hospitality of Bhai Lalo too was symbolic of his commitment to social harmony.

For stringing together the scattered fabric of society he

traveled to all the four directions. During these odysseys he kept with him all through the tour Mardana who belonged to the fourth *varna*. This was also an announcement of dissent against the tradition of casteism existing since ages. His meeting Bhagat Kabir and Bahgat Ravidas in Banaras and acquiring their bani for Adi Granth was a severe blow on the casteist structure. Going hard on this man-made hierarchy he writes:

**neechaa andar neech jaat neech hoo at neech.
naanak tin kai sang saath vadi-aa si-o ki-aa rees.**

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 15)

Guru Nanak's bani enshrined in 19 ragas is an indicator to the fact that wherever he went he had a direct interaction with the localites. He took a serious note of their culture, climatic conditions, convictions, beliefs etc. His ragas like Basant, Malhar and Tukhari pertain to the seasons viz. spring season, rainy season and winter respectively. To show solidarity with India as a whole he composed bani in the ragas of different states e.g. Maajh (Majha area), Tilang (Deccan), Gauri (Gaur region), Asa (Asa region), Sorath (Saurashtra) etc. Not to stop here, he has even used the words of these regions in his writings.

Wherever Guru Nanak noticed social stagnation he dealt with it in a very logical and rational manner rather than falling in altercation with others. In this context we can take his offering water in the wrong direction at Hardwar, snubbing the aarti at Jagannathpuri temple, exposing the qazi saying namaaz at Sultanpur and admonishing Babar on his face show his mettle and fortitude. At the back of his being revered by the Muslims as their vali was the revelation announced after coming out of Vein River: **Na ko Hindu na mussalmaan**. It was quite embalming for the bruised souls.

In 1969, when 500th. birth anniversary of Guru Nanak was celebrated all over the writer of this article was a student of ninth class in a Sanatan Dharm School where also the occasion was celebrated with full religious fervor. It shows that the guru was revered by all segments of society. None of us has seen the celebrations of Guru Nanak Dev's 400th. birth anniversary and we shall not be able to see his 600th. birth anniversary. That is why 550th. birth anniversary is attracting the attention of one and all. In fact, it was the social concerns of the guru's personality which endeared him to one and all.

POETIC FORMS IN GURU NANAK'S POETRY

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Guru Nanak Dev was an epoch maker spiritual leader of humanity. The moral and religious values preached by him can make anybody come on the right track if swerved. To communicate his message to the people he used many folk poetic forms because folk has a direct appeal to the heart. Here is a brief account of those folk forms of poetry which the gur employed for his noble mission:

VAR: Var is an important poetic form used in Punjabi poetry. It used to exist even before Guru Nanak. The bards used to sing praises of gallantry in this form. So var is in a way, praise. In another sense var means war or battle also. The very word owes its origin to the Sanskrit root 'vri' which means braving the attack. But since the bards used to go to the doorstep of their masters and sing praises, it is taken to mean praise in the present context. In Persian, word 'qaseeda', 'hamd' and 'naat' are used for var. Guru Nanak Dev has used ragas Maajh, Asa and Malhar in this poetic form. 'Asa Di Var' begins with mool mantra which is all praise only. Guru Nanak's vars have Shlokas also. In raga Maajh the guru has 46 shlokas and 27 pauris, in raga Asa 44 shlokas and 24 pauris and in raga Malhar he has 24 shlokas and 28 pauris.

OMKAR : This bani is written on the pattern of 'pati' on the basis of alphabetical order of 35 letters. This composition of 54 padas has been done in raga Ramkali. This is almost a package of all the philosophic and religious views of Guru Nanak. The basic problem of this composition is given in the two lines with 'Rahau'. In the bani, stanza has been packed with 8 verses but third, fourth, fifth and sixth stanzas are of four verses also and some of these have nine verses also. The symptoms of *chhands* like *dohira*, *chaupai*, *dawayya*, *nishani*, *chandrayan*, *radhina* etc. can also be seen. The nature of language used here is *sadhukkri*.

PATTI : Patti is a poetic form where each line starts with a letter of the alphabet. The guru used this form first of all in Punjabi literature. According to Puratan Janamsakhi the guru wrote it at the age of seven when he was sent to the pundit for studies. In this composition stress has been laid on praising God and His attainment through 35 padas. Each pada has two lines with two lines having 'Rahau' in addition to them. He number 35 indicates that it must be according to 35 letters of Gurmukhi alphabet but in fact, it is not. In this composition the first line starts with sassa, the second with eedi and the third one starts with oora. Here the guru has taught the pundit about the creation of universe, the grace of true God and problems of life and death.

SHLOKAS : Shloka is a very ancient poetic form that was in use prior to Guru Nanak. From among the naths, the ones like Machhandar Nath, Gorakh Nath, Charpat Nath, Bhathri, Gopi Chand and Baba Farid, the founder of Punjabi poetry used this poetic form. Guru Nanak has composed about 260 shlokas. Of these 145 belong to his vars and from out of the remaining 145 as many as 107 are compiled in different ragas of the gururs. Three shloka are entitled 'Sahakriti' 31 under the title of vars and vadheek. Besides, two shlokas are enshrined with 'Japu' and two others are given with the first and fifth chaupadas of raga Maru. These shlokas deal with the praise of God, love for God, devotion, uprightness of conduct and suggestions for social well-being.

GOSHTI : Ancient literature of the world is available in dialogue form. In Punjabi, the genre of gosht starts from Guru Nanak who wrote "Siddha Goshti". Literally, it means dialogue with the Siddhas but on the basis of an evidence found herein it can mean 'successful meeting' also e.g. *Naam rite sidh goshti hoi.*

Siddh Goshti has, in all, 73 pauris and the pauris are preceded with a shloka also. This composition is in raga Ramkali.

BARAMAH : Baramah is supposed to have its origin from 'khat ritu varnan' (the description of six seasons). The oldest Bramah in Punjab was written by Masood Kavi- a famous poet in

the Durbar of Lahore Governor Ibrahim (the grandson of Mehmud Ghazanavi). No specific meter is determined for Baramah. Guru Nanak has composed Baramah in Tukhari raga. This composition was written in the last days of his life. It analyses the process of the dissolution of self with the Supreme. The first eleven months of Baramah deal with pangs of separation and in the last month the *jeevatma* i.e. Soul attains the joy of communion.

ASHTPADI :Ashtpadi, as is evident from the name itself, is a compilation of eight *padas* or *padis*. One *pada* has one to four lines and after the first line there are one or two lines with *Rahau* also. Guru Nanak wrote 126 ashtpadis- 1 in raga mal, 18 in raga Gauri, 22 in raga Asa, 5 in Goojri, 4 in Sorathi, 2 in Dhanasari, 5 in soohi, 2 in Bilawal, 9 in raga Ramkali, 8 in raga Maru, one in raga Bhirau, 8 in Basant, 2 in Sarang, 5 in Malhar, 7 in Parbhati raga. These ashtpadis expound the religious and philosophic theories.

ALAUHNIS : Alauhni is a poetic form which is known as he refrain of sorrow or elegy in which the dead person is praised. Guru Nanak has composed five alauhnis in raga Wad-hans. They mark a distinction between death of a gurmukh and the one is engrossed in the illusory world of the mundane. The death of the former is blissful while that of the latter is horrifying.

Apart from the above also the guru has used several other poetic forms like *Thiti*, *Sodar*, *Aarti*, *Kuchajji*, *Suchajji*, *Chaupada*, *Chhand* etc. He has made use of these forms for a transformation in the life of people.

**Dr. Ram Murti
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Once I was going through a book written by one of my friends for the purpose of writing its review. While going through it I noticed that he had quoted the psychologists of the world renown like Sigmund Freud, Adler, Jung, Sullivan, Alexander, Erichsen etc. for establishing his postulates. What amazed me most was that while doing so he had ignored altogether Guru Nanak- the greatest psychologist of the world. Almost all the scholars associated with modern thought behave like to vindicate that we have turned our back on our own heritage- both poetic and philosophical. The armchair philosophers treat those engaged in reading and understanding Gurbani as reactionaries and give them scant attention. Often those who rely on Western thinkers' books are considered learned even though they are least concerned with our mundane concerns. Here we shall analyse the psychological aspect of Guru Nanak's bani.

The first point to understand here is that mind is not related to just body or this life only. It is linked to jeevatma i.e. soul for life after life. Soul which is an element of God is immortal and indestructible. It has to come in human garb again and again due to mind only. As per the spiritualist theory mind is made of five elements or say the sum total of these elements.

ih man saktee ih man see-o.

ih man panch tat ko jee-o.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 342)

Quoting Bhagat Kabir, Guru Nanak also accepts such nature and temperament of mind. He says:

ih man karmaa ih man Dharmaa.

ih man panch tat tay janmaa.

saakat lobhee ih man moorhaa.

gurmukh naam japai man roorhaa. ||3||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 415)

Made of five elements the mind remains engaged in collecting them. It becomes avaricious by indulgence in attachment and foolish activities of the world. He writes:

man maigal saakat dayvaanaa.
ban khand maa-i-aa mohi hairaanaa.
it ut jaahi kaal kay chaapay.
gurmukh khoj lahai ghar aapay. ||1||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 415)

Addicted to maya, the mind becomes mad. Entangled in material world man forgets his roots. He forgets his sublime existence. That is why caught in the grip of time it remains caught in the grip of time. The gurmukh carve their independent identity by realizing this identity of mind and get liberated from the cycle of births and rebirths.

According to gurnat, the reason for unrest of mind is the slavery of five vices: Lust, Anger, Avarice, Attachment and Arrogance. These five control him all the time. The vice-controlled mind has to reap the fruit of its deeds. The third guru writes in this regard:

ih man laalach kardaa firai laalach laagaa jaa-ay.
DhanDhai koorh vi-aapi-aa jam pur chotaa khaa-ay. ||3||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 994)

Guru Nanak Dev also writes in this context:

man jhoothaa jam johi-aa avgun chaleh naal.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 935)

And

man maa-i-aa man Dhaa-i-aa man pankhee aakaas.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1330)

Modern psychologist have described three states of mind: Conscious, Unconscious and Sub-conscious. The conscious mind deals with the waking state of man. When man moves in society, his conscious mind remains active during all this while. Unconscious is a big treasure of mind which contains suppressed surplus knowledge, unrequited desires and memories. In other

words it is a mosaic of man's deeds. Sub-conscious is called memory in common parlance. When some desire from the unconscious wants to find expression, it can be remembered according to feeling, desire or need. When the experiences of unconscious mind come to conscious mind, it leads to consciousness. This process of unconscious turning into conscious is taken as related to sub-conscious mind. Guru Nanak writes:

**aavai jaa-ay bhavaa-ee-ai pa-i-ai kirat kamaa-ay.
poorab likhi-aa ki-o maytee-ai likhi-aa laykh rajaa-ay.**
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 59)

The guru is of the view that *jeevatma* (Soul) keeps engaged in good bad deeds due to the *karmas* stored in the unconscious. The actions done in the present, (conscious) keep changing into its destiny. The unfulfilled desires turn into unconscious. These three layers of mind reflect in Nanak as under:

Galli asin changia aachari buriah (Sub-conscious)

Conscious

Manahu kusudha kalia (Unconscious)

Bahar chitviah

Guru Nanak has said that at conscious level man keeps projecting himself as man of high ethics and pious while vices lust, anger, greed, hubris, jealousy, enmity, rivalry etc. remain always hidden in his unconscious. He keeps expressing them off and on through subconscious. Forming separate organizations in the name of caste, race or religion and warring with other countries to usurp their territory come under this category. Conduct of the subconscious is the mirror of your unconscious. The problem of mind is that it never feels satiated or contented with the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. Guru Nanak writes in this context:

man jhoothaa jam johi-aa avgun chaleh naal.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 59)

man maa-i-aa man Dhaa-i-aa man pankhee aakaas.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1330)

man jogee man bhogee-aa man moorakh gaavaar.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1330)

Guru Amar Das makes this propensity more clear when he says:

ih man laalach kardaa firai laalach laagaa jaa-ay.
DhanDhai koorh vi-aapi-aa jam pur chotaa khaa-ay. ||3||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 994)

Thus we can see that gurbani and particularly Guru Nanak's bani deliberates on unconscious mind as this is the abode of vices. That is why unconscious remains sick. The vice is its staple diet with the result that lust, anger, greed, arrogance etc. attract it in a big way. Therefore, Guru Nanak has urged man to avoid the whimsicality of the unconscious. Modern psychology comes out with hypnotism to cure ills of the unconscious. But the technique of hypnotism is timely and outwardly. It does not offer a permanent solution to the problem. With the passage of time more and more complexes form in the mind and man beomes sick again. However, Nanak Bani suggests a way to kill mind:

baagh marai man maaree-ai jis satgur deekhi-aa ho-ay.
aap pachhaanai har milai bahurh na marnaa ho-ay.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1410)

The concept of killing mind has to be understood. It is as good as killing the wolf in you. The art of doing so can be learnt by getting initiated by a Master. This feat, the gur says, is performed by very few as most of the people keep making spirirtually degrading utterances only in subordination to mind:

hain virlay naahee ghanay fail fakarh sansaar. ||12||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1411)

Killing mind here simply means changing the tendency as if some pot is lying upside down and we put it in the right posture

as thorn extracts thorn and poison kills poison. (*Haume deergh rog hai daru bhi is mahi*)

Similarly, mind can be bridled only by changing its predilections. Its contents like anger, attachment, greed and hubris have to be replaced with respectively forgiveness, detachment, renunciation and humility. It will be killed itself. But this transformation can be brought about by the grace of the Satguru only:

man raajaa man man tay maani-aa mansaa maneh samaa-ee.
man jogee man binas bi-ogee man samjhai gun gaa-ee. ||3||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1125)

The third Master writes in this very context:

is man ka-o hor sanjam ko naahee vin satgur kee sarnaa-ay.
satgur mili-ai ultee bha-ee kahnaa kichhoo na jaa-ay. ||3||
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 558)

In the company of Satguru or a gurmukh the mind entangled hithertofore in vices as a slave to them becomes an emperor now. Guru Nanak writes:

ih man raajaa soor sangraam.
ih man nirbha-o gurmukh naam.
maaray panch apunai vas kee-ay.
ha-umai garaas ikat thaa-ay kee-ay. ||6||
gurmukh raag su-aad an ti-aagay.
gurmukh ih man bhagtee jaagay.
anhad sun maani-aa sabad veechaaree.
aatam cheeneh bha-ay nirankaaree. ||7||
ih man nirmal dar ghar so-ee.
gurmukh bhagat bhaa-o Dhun ho-ee.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 415)

It means that when mind listens the unstruck cosmic music at the direction of the guru, it attains to its real position. Withdrawing itself from vice it becomes a recipient of virtue only. Now it is the master of vices, not subservient to them.

On the basis of above discussion it can be said that

rummaging different layers of human mind Guru Nanak's bani builds its original psychology. Nanak's bani makes a discourse that the company of Satguru can heal a sick mind. The mind enslaved by vices can be made their master. Although success falls to the share of very few in this regard yet if man likes he can rise above worldly allurements by changing his mind:

man meh man ulto marai jay gun hoveh naal.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 935)

Thus Baba Nanak occupies an important place among the renowned psychologists of the world.

GURU NANAK- ADVISORY ON FOOD HABITS

Dr. Lakhbir Singh Naamdhari
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Numerous sages, seers, saints and prophets have appeared in the world over the centuries' long period of human history and even in pre-historic times. But there has been none to match the versatility of Guru Nanak who was a votary of global brotherhood and well-being of all. Like a scientist he declared the existence of millions of suns, moons, skies and Netherlands. An excellen poet, musician and singer, Baba Nanak disseminated his message by singing on the rebec of his friend Mardana. He was endowed with immense transformative power which could turn wicked people like Sajjan and Kauda into meek disciples and noble souls. He was very effective communicator also who convinced people through logical persuasion. He was very gutsy also who could say truth at the face of tyrants like Babar. He had the mettle to describe kings as wolfs and their minions as dogs. He was aware of the environmental hazards as well. It was due to this multifaceted and all-embracing personality that he was revered not only at home but abroad also under various names. He is Nanak Kadamdar in Russia, Baba Nanak in leaq, Nanak Vali in Egypt, Nanak Rishi in Nepal, Nanakacharya in Sri Lanka, Nanak Pir in Baghdad, Baba Fu Sa in China, Nanak Lama in Tibet, Guru Rimpoché in Sikkim-Bhutan and Vali Hind in Mecca. Besides, in India herself, he is known by various names like sant, faqir, Paighambar or Satguru by different people.

Guru Arjan Dev who edited Guru Granth Sahib, writes about Gur Nanak Dev on Page 750:

gi-aan Dhi-aan kichh karam na jaanaa
saar na jaanaa tayree.

sabh tay vadaa satgur naanak
jin kal raakhee mayree. ||4||10||57||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 750)

Along with spiritual message Gur Nanak guided humaniy on certain practical points also. He guided them on regulation of food habits. This advice of the guru that reaches us through raga,

is as relevant today as it was during his times. He writes:

baabaa hor khaanaa khusee khu-aar.

jit khaaDhai tan peerhee-ai man meh chaleh vikaar. ||1|| rahaa-o.
(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 16)

Eating and drinking is the basis of life. Without food and water creation cannot survive at all. Advising man- the crest and crown of living beings- not to eat anything that may make body and mind suffer because body and mind are interconnected. If body suffers mind also suffers and a suffering mind is prone to invite negative thoughts only. But we have no discipline in our food habits. We don't eat when we need but when food becomes available to us. The fast food and processed food has worsened the situation still further. Leave alone vitamins, minerals and antioxidants this kind of food is not even fit for consumption as it is not health-friendly. As a result we invite the onslaught of diseases like blood pressure, diabetes, heart attack, arthritis, tuberculosis, AIDS etc. The need of the day is to imbibe the sagacious advice of Guru Nanak on food habits. The guru says in raga Soohi on Page 790 of Guru Granth Sahib:

fit ivayhaa jeevi-aa jit khaa-ay vaDhaa-i-aa payt.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 790)

This is an admonition to those who develop a paunch with over eating. The guru also says that food cannot satisfy your hunger. In Japuji Sahib he says:

bhukhi-aa bhukh na utree jay bannaa puree-aa bhaar.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1)

Guru Nanak has prohibited drinking also. He has urged us to avoid the drink that pushes saying why drink such a thing that robs man of all reason, makes him forget God and makes him open to punishment in His court. He says:

jit peetai mat door ho-ay baral pavai vich aa-ay.

aapnaa paraa-i-aa na pachhaan-ee khashmahu Dhakay khaa-ay.

jit peetai khasam visrai dargeh milai sajaa-ay.

jhoothaa mad mool na peechee-ay jay kaa paar vasaa-ay.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 554)

But we are senselessly drinking sometimes to celebrate an occasion and sometimes to thrust our sorrow into temporary oblivion. The hospitals are full of the patients of damaged livers, gastro problems etc. It is not that man drinks liquor; it is the other way round also. It drinks down man's health, peace and property. The guru has advised man not to eat meat also. While speaking to Dev Loot-the demon, Raja Shivnabh, Duni Chand Khatri- a usurer of Lahore, Imams of Mecca , in dialogue with four imams of Madina and Kamal Din he described eating meat as a great sin. He writes in Soohi raga:

sa-o olaamHay dinai kay raatee milniH sahaNs.

sifat salaahan chhad kai karangee lagaa hans.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 790)

In gurbani, Guru Nanak Dev and other gurus have not only condemned flesh-eating and drinking liquor but likened the flesh-eater to an ungrateful man:

asaNkh galvadh hati-aa kamaahi.

asaNkh paapee paap kar jaahi.

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 4)

Trying to convince his contemporary pundits Kabir says that if they treated themselves piteous even after killing he-goats whom should he call butcher:

jee-a baDhahu so Dharam kar thaapahu

aDhram kahhu kat bhaa-ee.

aapas ka-o munivar kar thaapahu kaa

ka-o kahhu kasaa-ee. ||2||

(Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, page 1102)

Mann Meh Chaley Vikaar

Guru Nanak says that wrong food habits have their bad impact not only on body but mind also. It brings a disorder in the space of your feeling and thought also. If we eat after toiling hard our mind will remain poised but if we usurp someone's right for our food or killing animals it will fill our stomach and we shall look happy outwardly but our conscience will never pardon us.

As we eat, so shall be the mind.

Jaisa ann vaisa mann

A legend says that a man of uprightness ate from a dacoit's house and his mind got inclined towards thievery. Similarly if we eat from the home of a god-fearing and truly religious man it will enkindle noble thoughts in our mind. To deliver this very message Guru Nanak had refused to accept the hospitality of Malik Bhago and preferred to be guest at the home of Bhai Lalo, a humble and poor carpenter. Lord Krishna too is told to have rejected Duryodhan's hospitality and accepted Bidur's simple food. Guru Gobind Singh too had made it very clear through his *rehatnamas* that eating at the home of someone who does not earn an honest living and who does not have God in his mind, has a bad effect on the eater's mind. It severs his love bond with God. Bhai Desa Singh's *rehatnama* about Guru Gobind Singh says:

Ja ki rehat na jaaniye gurmantra nahi cheet

Un ka bhojan khai ke bisre hari seo preet

Satguru Jagjit Singh, the Namdhari Head used to propagate Guru Nanak Dev's teachings saying that whatever enters you by way of food has to have its effect on your feeling or thought process. Even the sight of a pious man and a cinema poster displayed at a public place affect you differently although they remain just outward.

There is parable in Namdhari history about Sant Jawahar Singh who had particular health problem. He was advised to have the milk of a she-camel only. Once he happened to stay with a relative. He had told the host beforehand clearly that he could stay with him only if his she-camel grazed from his field only. But one day the animal grazed a few blades of grass from some other farmer's field. That day the guest could not concentrate in meditation. He realized that there was some problem with milk. He asked the host relative who replied that while going to the field she had taken a couple of bites from someone else's field.

"In that case you should have told me. Now that you have failed in keeping your world, I must leave," Sant Jawahar Singh declared.

Guru Nanak had said that eating what does not belong to you is as bad as eating beef for a Hindu and pig for a Muslim. It meant that eating has its obnoxious effects at a subtle level. That is why food taken from a commercial food point is never as satisfying as the simple food prepared in our home kitchen by your mother, wife, sister or daughter because it has a sentiment of love in its preparation. The restaurant food can fill your stomach but it is devoid of all love or goodwill.

The guru says, "*Jit khaadhe tann peeriye*" meaning thereby that we must not eat anything which is detrimental to health. Today, even the nutritious food grown in our own fields including cereals, pulses, foodgrain, vegetables, fruits etc. too are under scanner because of the use of pesticides, chemical fertilizers etc. in the fields. The tendency to grab maximum yield and earn more profit in the process has jeopardized the quality of food. It has on one hand poisoned the food material and vitiated the environment on the other. We must read writing on the wall. About 500 years from now Guru Nanak had given us the message of "*Pavan guru pani pita*" in the larger interest of mankind. We must re-establish our snapped link with Nature and resort to organic farming. While Guru Nanak's bani warns us against eating anything that has its nefarious effect on body and mind, the book of medial science entitled "Junk Food" also seems to be giving the same message:

"To stay healthy bodily as well as mentally, always have home-cooked food grown with your own hands."

The following shabd of Guru Gobind Singh motivates man to eat less and eat with restraint to avoid obesity. It also inspires us to avoid lust, anger, avarice, attachment and arrogance to be a perfect human being.

***Alp aahaar sulap si nindra, daya chhimatann preet
Seel santokh sada nirbahibo, toobo trigun ateet
Kaam, krodh, hankaar, lobh, harm oh na mann so lyaave
Tab hi aatm chhadd ko dares param purkh keh paave***

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* Sr. Surinder Singh Kandhola S/o Late Sr. Lehmbur Singh Kandhola, Vill. - Moosapur, Banga (Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar)	Solihull (England)
* Councillor Raj Kumar Sood S/o Late Shri Kewal Krishan Sood, Vill. - Mehatpur, Nakodar (Jalandhar)	Bristol (England)
* Sr. Jasbir Singh Bachra S/o Late Sr. Jarnail Singh Bachra, Vill. - Khanpur, Banga (Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar)	Walsall (England)
* Sr. Gurbakhash Singh Bains S/o Late Sr. Gurmail Singh Bains, Vill. - Chambal Kalan (Hoshiarpur)	Coventry (England)
* Shri Narash Kumar Malhotra S/o Late Shri Satpal Malhotra, Shastri Nagar (Ludhiana)	-
* Bibi Balbir Kaur Sahota W/o Late Sr. Gurmeet Singh Sahota, Vill. - Bara Pind (Jalandhar)	Fresno, California (America)

Name and Ancestors Residence

Contemporary Dwelling

* Sr. Narinder Singh Bahia S/o Late Sr. Pakhar Singh Bahia (Lambardar), Vill. - Kukkar Pind (Jalandhar)	West Bromwich (England)
* Sr. Harjaap Singh Pooni S/o Late Sr. Gurchain Singh Pooni, Vill. - Jeendowal, Banga (Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar)	Bradford, Yorkshire (England)
* Late Sr. Balwant Singh Sandhu, Late Bibi Niranjan Kaur Sandhu & Family, Railway Road Nakodar (Jalandhar)	Droitwich, Worcs (England)
* Bibi Gurdev Kaur W/o Late Sr. Lachhman Singh, Vill. - Poonia, Shahkot (Jalandhar)	Barnts Green, Worcs (England)
* Sr. Dilbag Singh S/o Late Sr. Lachhman Singh, Vill. - Poonia, Shahkot (Jalandhar)	Barnts Green, Worcs (England)
* Sr. Resham Singh S/o Late Sr. Lachhman Singh, Vill. - Poonia, Shahkot (Jalandhar)	Ely, Cambridgeshire (England)
* Sr. Amarjeet Singh S/o Late Sr. Lachhman Singh, Vill. - Poonia, Shahkot (Jalandhar)	Cannock, Staffordshire (England)
* Sr. Harbhajan Singh Nijjar, Vill. - Kingra Cho Wala, Bhogpur (Jalandhar)	Droitwich, Worcs (England)
* Sr. Harjinder Singh Sangha S/o Sr. Niranjan Singh Sangha, Vill. - Mahunwal (Jalandhar)	Danoon, Glasgow (Scotland)
* Sr. Jaspal Singh Sandhu S/o Late Sr. Balwant Singh Sandhu, Railway Road Nakodar (Jalandhar)	Droitwich, Worcs (England)
* Sr. Amrik Singh Lalli, Vill. - Rampur, Lambra (Jalandhar)	Derby (England)
* Sr. Rajvinder Singh Hundal, Vill. - Fattu Chak (Kapurthala)	Brampton, Toronto (Canada)
* Sr. Gurdarshan Singh Sangha S/o Late Sr. Gurmej Singh Sangha, Vill. - Mahunwal (Jalandhar)	Ayrshire (Scotland)
* Sr. Niranjan Singh Sangha S/o Late Sr. Gurmej Singh Sangha, Vill. - Mahunwal (Jalandhar)	Ayrshire (Scotland)
* Sr. Gurdeep Singh Sangha S/o Late Sr. Gurmej Singh Sangha, Vill. - Mahunwal (Jalandhar)	Fresno, California (America)
* Sr. Jagtar Singh Dhadwaal S/o Sr. Ranjeet Singh Dhadwaal, Vill. - Lakhpur (Kapurthala)	Ayrshire (Scotland)
* Sr. Rashpal Singh Athwal, Vill. - Chitti, Lambra (Jalandhar)	Derby (England)

Name and Ancestors Residence	Contemporary Dwelling
* Sr. Satinderjeet Singh Sandhu S/o Late Sr. Paramjeet Singh Sandhu, Railway Road Nakodar (Jalandhar)	Wales (Britain)
* Shri Ram Asra Jakhu, Mohalla Ravidas Pura, Nakodar (Jalandhar)	Bottisham, Cambridge (England)
* Shri Surinder Kumar Jakhu, Mohalla Ravidas Pura, Nakodar (Jalandhar)	Bottisham, Cambridge (England)
* Sr. Lakhvir Singh Dosanjh S/o Late Sr. Ajmer Singh Dosanjh, Vill. - Billa Nawab, Nakodar (Jalandhar)	Droitwich, Worcs (England)
* Sr. Jagjeet Singh Panesar S/o Sr. Swaran Singh Panesar, Mohalla Shankar Garden Colony, Nakodar (Jalandhar)	Southall (England)
* Sr. Jaspal Singh Panesar S/o Sr. Swaran Singh Panesar, Mohalla Shankar Garden Colony, Nakodar (Jalandhar)	Scarborough (Canada)
* Sr. Harpal Singh Panesar S/o Sr. Swaran Singh Panesar, Mohalla Shankar Garden Colony, Nakodar (Jalandhar)	Scarborough (Canada)
* Sr. Gurdeep Singh Panesar S/o Sr. Swaran Singh Panesar, Mohalla Shankar Garden Colony, Nakodar (Jalandhar)	Vancouver (Canada)
* Sr. Manpreet Singh Malhi S/o Sr. Parkash Singh Malhi, Vill. - Nangal Khera, Phagwara (Kapurthala)	Brampton (Canada)
* Sr. Jagjeet Singh Sandhu S/o Sr. Inderjeet Singh Sandhu, Railway Road Nakodar (Jalandhar)	Brampton (Canada)
* Sr. Surjeet Singh Randhawa S/o Late Sr. Sadhu Singh Randhawa, Railway Road Nakodar (Jalandhar)	Brisbane (Australia)
* Sr. Harminder Singh Sandhu S/o Sr. Jaspal Singh Sandhu, Railway Road Nakodar (Jalandhar)	Droitwich, Worcs (England)
* Sr. Satnam Singh Dhesi S/o Sr. Amar Singh Dhesi, Vill. - Roopewal, Phillaur (Jalandhar)	Oldbury, Birmingham (England)
* Sr. Manjinder Singh Mattu S/o Late Sr. Charan Singh Mattu, Vill. - Mehatpur (Jalandhar)	Tipton, Birmingham (England)
* Sr. Chamkaur Singh Maan S/o Sr. Jagga Singh Maan, Vill.- Kishanpur Kalan, Dharmkot (Moga)	Birmingham (England)
* Late Mata Chanan Kaur Bagri and her son Late Sr. Surjit Singh Bagri & Family, Vill. - Chak Khurd, Nakodar (Jalandhar)	-

1. Sultanpur

2. Sayyadpur

3. Talwandi

4. Tulamba

5. Pehowa & Kurukshetra

6. Panipat

7. Hariduar

8. Gorakhmata (Now Nanakmata)

9. Paryag

10. Kashi (Banaras)

11. Gaya

12. Patna

13. Dhubri

14. Shillong

15. Silhat

16. Dhaka

17. Chaubis Pargana (Calcutta)

18. Cuttack

19. Jagannathpuri

20. Kudappa

21. Ghanthur

22. Kanchipuram

23. Tiruvanamalai

24. Trichnapalli

25. Anuradhapur

26. Trivendrum

27. Kotayam

28. Bidar

29. Nander

30. Baroch

31. Gimar

32. Junagarh

33. Dwarka

34. Ujjain

35. Chittaurgarh

36. Ajmer

37. Bikaner

38. Mathura

39. Pak Patan

40. Kartarpur

41. Pir Buddhan Shah

42. Bilaspur

43. Mandi

44. Kangra

45. Sipki Darra

46. Kailash

47. Shakra

48. Guru Dongmar

49. Kathmandu

50. Leh

51. Shrinagar, Muttan

52. Jammu

53. Sayalkot

54. Multan

55. Uch

56. Sukar

57. Sindh

58. Macca

59. Madina

60. Baghdad

61. Tehran

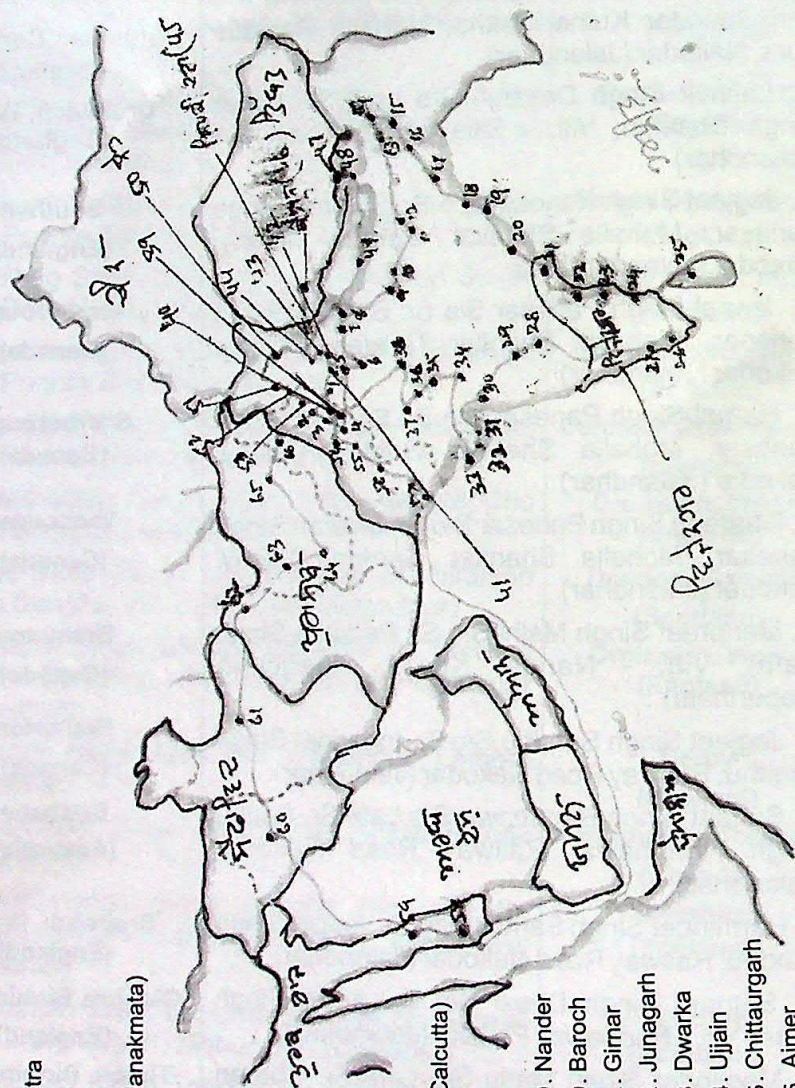
62. Mash-had

63. Herat

64. Kandhar

65. Kabul

66. Peshawar





The followers of every religious faith have been propagating their religion as the greatest of all and the one and only way to lead to the communion with God. Guru Nanak Dev ji took the entire creation including the animate fauna and flora as also inanimate beings as one single whole. His path of marking unity among our earth, Sun and planets revolving around it was quite unthought of five hundred years ago. Treating whole creation as one he gave its credit to Nature- the supreme Creator. Guru Nanak's greatest philosophy is his concept of *Ek Onkar*. We never get to grasp its essence is freed of not only feelings of enmity towards anybody but even the sense of estrangement altogether. It transcends the biological relations and becomes one with the existence. When we imbibe the guru's message of *Sarbat da Bhala* (All being well), then we feel to have become one with the entire universe with its constituents like vegetation, mountains, deserts, oceans etc. The man-made barriers stand dissolved on their own. The egocentric people abandon their greed, arrogance, lust, hubris, craze for fame and fame and come on the track of *gurmat*. The panacea of Guru Nanak's ideology salvages us from inertia and leads us on the path of true bliss. Since times immemorial spiritual masters, scientists, geographers, environmentalists, philosophers and litterateurs have been trying to demystify the mystery of existence but nobody could match Guru Nanak who came out with very brief, lucid and comprehensive concept of the origin of existence. The way he explained the whole thing with a combo of vocal and instrumental music is unprecedented so far.

Dr. Nirmal Singh

Mota Singh Sarai



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